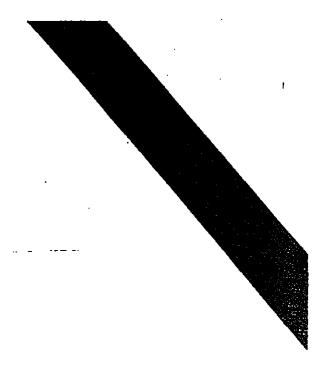
day, February 13.7

Bomb blast injures at least 9 in Kosovo

UROSEVAC (AP) - A rare daytime bombing in Kosovo injured at least nine people Saturday outside a government-owned bank as violence persisted in the separatist province despite ongoing peace talks.
As many as 20 shops were damaged in the 1 p.m. blast just outside the Jugobanka Bank in Urosevac, 40 kilometers south of the provincial capital Pristina. The bomb was "huge," with an explosive power perhaps equal to that of an anti-tank mine, said Jorgen Grunnet, spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe. OSCE bomb experts reported damage for 100 metres (yards). The ethnic Albanians' Kosovo Information Center said at least seven of the





Volume 24 Number 7070

vicums were Kosovo Albanians.

AMMAN SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 1999, SHAWWAL 28, 1419

Price: Jordan 200 Fils

tions and dignitaries; Saudi

Arabian Deputy Chief of

the National Guard Prince

Bader Ben Abdul Aziz Al

Saud. Kuwaiti Defence

Minister Sheikh Salem Al

Sabah, Egyptian Foreign

Minister Amr Musa, French

President Jacques Chirac,

Tunisian President Zine Al

Abidine Ben Ali, Egyptian

Shura Council President Mustafa Hilmi, Seif Islam

Muammar Qadhafi, son of

the Libyan president, the presidents of Sri Lanka,

Romania, Indonesia, Gambia, Ethiopia, Iceland,

North Korea, Brazil, Aus-

tria, Singapore, Cyprus and

Switzerland, a former Aus-

trian president, the secre-

tary general of the Arab

Interior Ministers Council.

Ahmad Al Salem, the prime

ministers of Jamaica and

Belgium, and Nepal's king.

King receives

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Abdullah on

Saturday received a cable

from Iranian President

Mohammad Khatami, who

congratulated the King

upon assuming his consti-

In his message, Khatami

stressed the importance of

strengthening bilateral ties

and expressed hope that

relations would improve to

the benefit of the two coun-

The Iranian president pray to God for King

Abdullah's health and suc-

cess as well as happiness

and prosperity for the Jor-

Also Saturday, King

Abdullah received cables

expressing condolences

over the passing away of

King Hussein from the fol-

lowing countries, organisa-

tutional duties.

tries' interests.

danian people.

condolences from

Iranian president

Senior Hamas official arrested

GAZA CITY (AP) - Palestinian police on Saturday accused a senior leader of the Islamist group Hamas of aiding a fugitive sought in the death of a police officer. Police said Mahmoud Zahar violated Palestinian law of aiding a fugitive when he performed surgery on a member of the group's military branch, who suffered gun shot wounds during a shootout with Palestinian police two weeks ago. Zahar was well aware that the man was sought by police and yet he provided him with medical care and surgery in his private clinic," the police statement said. Zahar, a paediatrician, was summoned for questioning Thursday.

20 killed in South African accident

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) Twenty people were killed, including four members of a family, in a head-on collision between two minibuses near South Africa's northern mining town of Rustenburg Saturday, police said. Fourteen of the 18 passengers in one minibus died while six people, including a mother, father and two of their children, were killed in the other minibus. Five people were seriously injured in the smash.

Nigeria clears shantytown after FIFA complaints

LAGOS (AFP) - Local government workers, protected by armed soldiers, have begun clearing out a shantytown of homes and bars in Lagos, turfing out hundreds of residents, after complaints from international football authorities, residents and officials said Saturday. Residents of the shantytown area known as Bar Beach, Lagos, told AFP Saturday they had been ordered out and their homes flattened with bulldozers after Nigerian authorities received complaints from FIFA, the international footballing body. Nigeria is to host the youth World Cup in April and is desperate not to do anything that will make FIFA withdraw its hosting rights.

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Bomb kills Spaniard in resort

SALOU (AFP) — A 63-yearold Spuniard was killed Saturday when a bomb buried in the sand exploded at Salou, on Spain's nonheastern coast, police said. Investigators were reluctant to link the powerful blast to Basque separatists, officials said, noting that the ETA, which mounted armeks on seaside resorts in the past, has observed a truce since September. Police ruled out the possibility that the bomb was an old device, saying the beach was checked frequently.

German tourist killed in cyclone in Turkey

ANKARA (AFP) - A German tourist was killed and another injured when a billboard crashed on to the hood of their car during a cyclone in the southern Turkish province of Antalya, the Anatolia news agency reported Saturday. The victim in Friday's incident was identified as 70-year-old Helmia Werner. Her injured friend, 76year-old Monfert Schmiot, was reported to be in critical condition. The tourists were travelling from Antalya airport to the province's Belek town in the car of a Turkish friend at the time of the incident Augtolia said.

King Abdullah meets with German FM

EU reiterates commitment to Jordan

By Francesca Ciriaci with agencies

AMMAN - The European Union on Saturday reiterated its commitment to stand by Jordan politically and financially in recognition of its pivotal role in the Middle East peace process and in the region as a whole.

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, whose country currently holds the six-month rotating presidency of the EU, said after talks here vesterday with His Majesty King Abdul-lah that "both Germany and the EU understand that Jordan is in very difficult situation. because it is in between the Palestinians and Israel, on one side, and Iraq on the other."

"We told King Abdullah that we will continue our financial and economic help." Fischer told a press conference.

Germany last year decided to cancel all of Jordan's debt under a JD21.3 million debt-swap.

Announcing the decision during a visit here last November, German State Minister for Foreign Affairs Ludger Volmar said then that Jordan's DM50 million debt [was to be] swapped into development projects because the peace dividends we all had hoped for have not materialised."

Israel froze the implementation of last October's Wye River Memorandum, which King Hussein worked hard to mediate, rising from his sick-bed during chemotherapy treatment to give peace yet another chance.

"We agreed with King Abdullah on the full implementation of the Wye agreement before May 4 [the deadline of the Oslo interim peace agreements between Israel and the Palestinians]," Fischer said yesterday.

He also said Jordan and Europe shared the same convictions that the Middle East must be freed from weapons of mass destruction and that Iraq must fully comply with U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"But we also agree that the suffering of the Iraqi people must be alleviated," he added. Fischer stressed the need for

the international community to continue discussing various proposals presented by the U.S., France, and the Arab League on a partial lifting of the nine-year-old sanctions on Baghdad.

On behalf of both Germany and the EU, the envoy also expressed "deep regret over the death of King Hussein, a very important man for the peace process."

We must find ways to solve the problems which Jordan obviously has in the economic sector because we are very interested in stability here in Jordan," Fischer told reporters before heading to Cairo for the seventh leg of a Middle East

During his brief visit to Jordan. Fischer also held talks with Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib, who said "discussions concentrated on the peace process and the need for alleviating the plight of the Iraqi peo-



His Majesty King Abdullah meets Saturday with German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer at Raghadan Palace (AP photo)

"We expressed Jordan's appreciation for Germany's and Europe's support, and also expressed our hopes that this support will be enhanced." Khatib said at the press confer-

Fischer — accompanied by EU Middle East envoy Miguel Angel Moratinos and European Commission Vice President Manuel Marin — has already visited Israel, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Syria and

Earlier Saturday, he held talks with Syrian President Hafez Assad and stressed the need for progress in the Middle East peace process.

The alternative to the peace process in the Middle East is very dangerous — it's war," Fischer was quoted as saying by Agence France Presse.
"We know the problems fin

the peace process] but we have the ability to talk to the protagonists and work them out step by step," he said.

The EU must play its role

and do all it can, notably on the economic side, to help establish confidence between the protagonists so that they can find an acceptable solution themselves," he added.

well as relations between Syria

and Germany, and Damascus

ated comments last week by

Secretary of State Madeleine

Albright that Washington

reserved the right to use force

British press reports have

The Guardian last week said

a meeting took place in late

December in the Afghan

mountains near Kandahar

between the exiled Saudi

Islamist and Baghdad's ambas-

sador in Turkey, Farouk Hijazi,

one of the top Iraqi intelligence

The newspaper, which cited

U.S. intelligence sources and

Iraqi opposition figures, said

Ben Laden's response was

It linked the meeting to a

warning this week by U.S.

Attorney General Janet Reno

before the Senate that a terrorist

attack involving weapons of

mass destruction was a grow-

Middle East specialist at Georgeown University,

The newspaper also quoted a

unknown.

ing concern.

said Ben Laden was also

believed to be plotting to attack

British targets in Europe.

against terrorism.

and the European Union.

Kourieh was quoted as saying that members of Fischer's delegation as well as Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Shara'a sat in on the talks with Assad, which focused on the peace process as

Jordanian-Palestinian confederation is Assad spokesman Jibran 'premature' — official

> AMMAN (J.T.) — A senior Palestinian official Saturday echoed Jordan's view a confederation between Jordan and Palesemphasised that the two sides were maintaining close coordination and cooperation at all levels.

The speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), Ahmad Qoureia. who met yesterday with Prime Minister Fayez Tarawneh, said "a confederation is premature, but I cannot imagine a future Jordanian-Palestinian relationship without some formula approved by the peoples of the two sides."

"The Palestinian National Council has approved the idea of establishing a confederation between two independent Qoureia was quoted as saying by the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

He said he was hopeful Palestinian-Israeli negotiations would succeed and would lead to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, after which Jordan and Palestine could reach an agreement

in this respect. Foreign Minister Abdul Ilah Khatib Friday reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, including the right to establish an independent state on Palestinian national soil. He said that once this state is established, "all options will be open for a future relationship between Jordan and Palestinian President

Yasser Arafat surprised politicians announcement Friday that tine is premature but he was interested in forging a confederation between Jordan and a future Palestinian state. Qoureia told journalists

after meeting Tarawneh that Arafat's reflect the "excellent" nature of Jordanian-Palestinian relations and the close bonds between the two sides.

He said Arafat made the remarks in recognition of King Hussein's "great efforts" in supporting the Palestinian cause and peo-

Qoureia, who met with His Majesty King Abdullah to offer condolences in his name and on behalf of the PLC on the passing of King Hussein, said the Palestinian leadership will maintain close cooperation with Jordan, noting that the current situation is very critical and requires intensive meetings and constant coordination.

"The Palestinian National Authority is very keen on pursuing cooperation with His Majesty King Abdullah on all fronts." Qoureia said. In reply to a question about the exchange rate of the Jordanian dinar in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip following the death of King Hussein, Qoureia said: "The dinar is an official currency for the Palestinians and the exchange rate has returned to nor-

Libya announces 'positive results' in Lockerbie case

announced Saturday that mediation efforts had led to "positive results" in the Lockerbie affair but cautioned the thorny issue of U.N. sanctions imposed on Tripoli remained unresolved.

The statement came amid reports that Tripoli had agreed that the two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing be jailed in Scotland under U.N. monitoring if convicted, overcoming the latest hurdle in the long

process to bring the men to trial. "Positive results were reached in the Lockerbie matter thanks to the intensive efforts of Saudi Arabia and South Africa," Libya's foreign ministry said in a statement cited by

the official news agency JANA. "All that remains is for coordination with U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan and the other parties involved" to ensure the lifting of sanctions, imposed on Libya in 1992 over its refusal to extradite the two suspects, wanted for the bombing of a Pan Am jet over Scotland that left 270 dead.

Western diplomats in New York told AFP earlier that Libya had retreated from earlier demands and agreed that the men — Abdul Basset Ali Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhirnah — would serve jail terms in Scotland if convicted.

But the diplomats said the agreement, accepted by Washington and London and in the process of being drawn up by Annan's legal team, provides for the suspension of U.N. sanctions.

It was unclear if their suspension, rather than an outright lifting would satisfy Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi's demands.

Britain and the United States have threatened to tighten sanctions unless the men are handed over by Feb. 26 when the U.N. Security Council will review the Libva embargo.

The diplomars said that as a result of Saudi and South

TRIPOLI (AFP) - Libya African mediation in the case, made at Annan's request, Britain and the United States have agreed that the U.N. chief could certify Libya was no longer involved with "terror-

This certification would enable the U.N. Security Council to lift the sanctions completely after a further 90-day

The diplomats stressed, however, that a clear statement should be made by Tripoli concerning the latest understand-

We need a clear acceptance of the terms," one diplomat familiar with the process told

In London a Foreign Office spokesman said earlier that British diplomats in Tripoli were not aware of any decision by the Libyan government on

He added that London did not expect to be able to comment further until it had been in

touch with Annan on Sunday. Annan on Saturday issued a statement saying he was "greatly encouraged" after being briefed on developments on Friday by Rihab Massoud,

deputy chief of mission of the Saudi embassy in Washington. He said he was "looking forward to the speedy conclusion of this matter" as Western diplomats said the U.N. chief was drafting a letter to Libya

that would set out the terms of

the agreement. But the letter, a copy of which was expected to go to the U.N. Security Council, was not expected to be ready before Monday or Tuesday.

Announcement of the breakthrough came earlier Saturday in a statement from South African President Nelson Mandela's office that said a "common understanding" had been reached on all outstanding

Ben Laden 'missing,' Taleban say

KABUL (AFP) — Alleged Saudi Islamist Osama Ben Laden has "gone missing" and his whereabouts are unknown, a spokesman for Afghanistan's ruling Taleban militia said Sat-

"About Sheikh Osama, we that he has just heard today that he has gone missing and we have no idea if he is still in Afghanistan or left the country.

"But we have not forced him out," Taleban spokesman Tayeb Khan said from Kanda-

Taleban officials said no pressure was put on Ben Laden to leave the country despite repeated efforts by the United States to extradite the Saudi dissident to stand trial for the bombings of two U.S. embassies in east Africa on Aug. 7 which left more than

200 people dead. Ben Laden was believed to have been living in Kandahar, the Taleban's defacto base in southern Afghanistan, since the U.S. last year launched retaliatory missile strikes against his base in Afghanistan.

The United States said Thursday Taleban moves to isolate Ben Laden within Afghanistan were not accept-

"Our view is that what they have announced falls woefully short of what is required," State



Osama Ben Laden

Department spokesman James Foley told reporters.

The Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) Wednesday reported the Taleban had banned Ben Laden from accepting visitors or having outside contact. All communication equip-

ment including his telephone and radio had been withdrawn, AIP reported. Speaking Thursday Foley said the Taleban move was not

enough for someone "who has killed innocent civilians and... has promised to continue killing innocent civilians." Foley would not comment on

reports the United States had threatened military strikes against the Taleban if they did not expel Ben Laden, but reiter-

Mamoun Fandy, as saying Taleban leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar, had promised the Saudis once his radical Islamist movement secured control over all of Afghanistan, Ben Laden would

Speculation on Tarawneh government's fate starts in earnest

By Francesca Ciriaci

AMMAN — The capital's elite circles are rife with speculation on the fate of the government of Fayez Tarawneh, with some expecting its resignation within a matter of days and others betting it will carry on for weeks.

Although not written in the law books, many contend that the government should step down in line with a traditional policy following the proclamation of a new King.

"It already happened when King Talal and King Hussein took the reins of the country," said a former minister. "I do not see why it should not happen

Although the camp of those expecting Tarawneh's resignation can count on historical precedents to support

their argument, they are still divided as to whether His Majesty King Abdullah will accept Tarawneh's resignation and appoint a new premier to form a

NEWS ANALYSIS

new government in the next few days or ask the 23-member Cabinet to continue for a while to allow for extensive consultations with former prime ministers and politicians to take place.

Some politicians say that to cope with the dramatic changes that Jordan witnessed in the past few weeks, King Abdullah could ask Tarawneh to carry on after a reshuffle which could involve, they say, more than a handful

of portfolios. Changing the government is not an urgent matter. It can wait," said former Prime Minister Ahmad Obeidat.

But, he stressed, a government change will eventually come naturally as part of the "comprehensive review" that King Hussein announced but did have time to finalise, and as part of the "major changes" that King Abdullah has already promised to support the democratisation process and political pluralism, and boost civil society insuunions.

When King Talal ascended to the Throne, on Sept. 6, 1951, then-premier Tawfiq Abul Huda resigned two days later, but formed a new government on the same day.

Similarly, when King Hussein ascended to the Throne, on Aug. 11, 1952, Abul Huda handed in his resignation a few weeks later, on Sept. 27, 1952, only to form a new government on Sept. 30.

Experts say a parallel supporting the thesis that Tarawneh should hand in his resignation could also be drawn with the constitutional stipulation that the government is required to receive a new vote of confidence whenever a new Parliament is elected.

Hopes are high among liberals and reformists that King Abdullah's plans for Jordan's new course will include more press freedoms, through amendments to the 1998 Press and Publications Law, and a new elections law to rectify the current imbalances deriving from a one-person, one-vote formula applied to unequal constituencies.

(Continued on page 2)

'Kurdish leader seeking asylum in Netherlands'

Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan is seeking asylum in the Netherlands, the Dutch news agency ANP reported Saturday.

It said Ocalan's German had officially requested political asylum in the Netherlands for the Kurdish leader on Feb. 10, citing humanitarian grounds.

In a letter to the justice ministry here, lawyer Britta Boehler said Ocalan's life was in danger.

She said the unnamed country in which Ocalan was currently staying had threatened to hand him over to Turkey.

Ocalan, leader of the separatist Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), is wanted in Ankara to face charges of terrorism and murder linked to his group's 14-year armed struggle for a Kurdish homeland in southeastern

Ocalan, 49, has been looking for a host country since he was forced out of his long-term base in Syria in mid-October.

He was arrested in Rome in November by police acting on international warrants but was later released after Italy refused to extradite him to Turkey because he could face the death penalty there.

He left Italy on Jan. 16 for an unknown destination and has since reportedly been turned away from the Switzerland Netherlands. and Greece.

Meanwhile Basque regional parliamentary speaker Juan Maria Atutxa said Saturday his assembly would host a meeting of the Kurdish parliament in exile in July despite opposition from the Spanish government.

Since its establishment in The Hague in 1995, the selfproclaimed Kurdish parliament has convened six times European countries, sparking harsh criticism

Ocalan not expected to give himself up in Germany

BONN (R) — The German government dismissed a media report on Friday that fugitive Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan would soon hand himself over to the German authorities.

"We do not expect him here and there are no indications he should turn up," spokesman Uwe-Karsten Heye told a regular government news conference. . .

The news magazine Der Spiegel reported that Ocalan planned to turn himself in to Germany, which has an arrest warrant for him on charges of leading a criminal group and for a series of firebombing of Turkish targets in the mid-1990s.

Ocalan, chief of the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) and Turkey's most wanted man, has kept the world guessing as to his whereabouts since he was released in Italy in January after two months in custody. Turkey says it has been hot on the trail of the man it blames for a 14-year war for Kurdish self-rule that has

cost more than 29,000 lives. This has prompted speculation Ocalan might attempt to give himself up in Germany fearing he might otherwise be kidnapped and taken to Turkey where he could face

The guerrilla leader's lawyer, Britta Boehler, said in Amsterdam recently he had tried to enter the Netherlands but was turned back. She said he was hiding outside

CELEBRATORY CAKE FOR ASSAD: This huge cake was made to celebrate the reelection of Syrian President Assad for a new term in Damascus on Saturday. The cake weighs 950 kgs, 4.60 metres in height, the base 2x2 metres while the upper base was 120x120 cms. At the top is a special statue of the head of Assad surrounded by

Hamas supporters occupy police station

JERICHO (AFP) — Hundreds of Palestinians brandishing the green flag of the Hamas Islamic Resistance Movement Friday occupied police headquarters here demanding the release of Islamists who have gone on hunger strike.

The protesters, numbering around 600, forced their way into the building, at times trading blows with the Palestinian police offi-

No shots were fired and they were asked to peacefully leave the police sta-

They said they wanted to stage a show of support for the five Palestinian Islamists imprisoned at Jericho who have been on hunger strike for the last two weeks. Four of the prisoners are members of Hamas and the fifth belongs to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Islamists at Nablus have also gone on hunger strike to try and force their release and some 1 000 Palestinians demonstrated Friday in a show of support for them.

The prisoners are protesting their detention without trial or charges by the Palestinian National Authority

The PNA has pledged to crack down on the armed wing of Hamas and other groups opposed to peace accords with Israel as part of the U.S.-brokered Wye River land-for-security deal

Suspect confesses to forming armed group in Yemen

ADEN (AP) — The son of an Islamist leader confessed in court Saturday to forming an armed group in Yemen but denied charges of weapons possession. The prosecution had

charged that Mohammad Kamel, a Mustapha Briton, was found in possession of grenades and firearms when he was arrested.

Kamel is the son of Abu Hamza Al Masry. an Islamist leader. Yemen is seeking Al Masry's extradition from Britain.

In addition to Kamel, Shaz Nabi, Ayad Hussein Ali Monsen were brought to trial for the first time since they were arrested in January.

They joined six other Westerners being tried on charges of associating with armed groups, plotting murder and destruction, and possessing weapons.

It was the first time that all 10 men have been in court at the same time. Nabi and Hussein, both

Britons, and Mohsen, an Algerian with a French passport who lives in Britain, have denied the charges.

The other six on trial are Britons Mohsin Ghalain, 18. Malik Nasser Harbra. 26, Ghulam Hussein, 25, Shahid Butt, 33, and Samad Ahmad, 21, and Frenchman Luovres, 30.

All six have pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The four new suspects appeared healthy but tired as they were brought into the courtroom in the southern Yemeni city of Aden amid tight security.

The hearing was attended by British Consul David Pearce and defendants' families, journalists, diplomats and lawyers.

The defendants have been linked to Islamic rad-Westerners in December. four of whom died in a shootout when Yemeni security forces sought to rescue the hostages.

The trial was adjourned until Tuesday to give the defense team of the four new suspects more time to review the case.

Unlike the two previous sessions, when defendants exchanged insults with security forces and shouted claims of torture, Saturday's hearing was relative-

More than 300 policemen armed with AK-47s surrounded the threestorey courthouse.

Turkey evaluates Iraq policy prior to Aziz visit

ANKARA (AFP) — Turkey's senior government officials and diplomats on Saturday evaluated Ankara's policy on Iraq prior to Monday's visit by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz.

We made a general evaluation of the current situation," Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem told reporters after the meeting. without elaborating.

According to unconfirmed reports, the meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, focused on updating a plan he prepared in 1996 for stability and peace in the The plan includes reassur-

ing Baghdad about its territorial integrity, lifting the trade embargo if Iraq com-plies with U.N. resolutions. and helping to start a dialogue between Baghdad and Kurdish groups in northern

Ecevit has said in the past week that Turkey would make "constructive proposals" on the Iraqi crisis in the meeting with Aziz.

Aziz said in an interview published in a Turkish daily newspaper Friday that his talks in Ankara would touch upon the permission given by Turkey to U.S. planes to launch air strikes against Iraq from their base at Incirlik in southern Anatolia.

Planes taking off from Incirlik have clashed with Iraqi air defences several times during patrol flights in the northern no-fly zone since the four-day joint U.S.-

British air strikes against Baghdad in December.

'The use of Incirlik air base by American planes to bomb Iraq is a blemish on Iraqi-Turkish relations. We must eliminate this blemish," Aziz told the daily Turkiye.

In response, Cem on Friday pointed out Turkey's obligation with regards to the Incirlik air base. "[The use of the air base at] Incirlik and Operation Northern Watch have been decided by the Turkish parliament," he

Aziz's visit, meanwhile, has led to unease on the part of Washington, Ankara's we don't understand Prime Minister Ecevit's decision to host Tareq Aziz at this time." Department spokesman James Foley told reporters Thursday.

Turkey, which supported the U.S. in the 1991 Gulf War, has called on its southem neighbour several times to comply with U.N. resolutions as the means of integrating Baghdad with the international community.

Ecevit has further criticised the U.S. of having a "vague" policy on Iraq and called for closer consultations between Washington and Ankara to resolve the

Speculation on fate of Tarawneh government starts in earnest

(Continued from page 1)

"If there is a new government and a good understanding of the future, these [the elections and press laws] are expected be reviewed," Obeidat said.

The proclamation on Feb. 7 of King Abdullah. 37, has sparked many hopes in a country where, according to the Department of Statistics, more than 83 per cent of the 4.6 million population

are below the age of 40.
"The era of the Fourth Kingdom has began." said an observer close to the leadership. "People expect a comprehensive, total change, not just a cosmetic operation." Although a new course

by old faces, "the King ernment coming in now succumbed 11 days later, might not want to accept would not have much Speculation about the government's resignation until he has completely made up his mind on the new faces he intends to bring up and, most importantly, on the changes he intends to introduce," the observer

Summarising the swing of speculation, one former premier stated that "the question is not whether there will be a new government, but when

With the 1999 budget already endorsed in early January and the ordinary session of Parliament ending in March, "many games have already been played out." he said,

is not likely to be charted adding that any new gov- lymphoma to which he manoeuvring space. Talks of the govern-

ment's resignation started as soon as King Hussein returned to Jordan on Jan. 19 from six months of chemotherapy treatment in the U.S. With the appointment

of King Hussein's eldest son as Crown Prince, replacing HRH Prince Hassan. local and international reported that Tarawneh had instructed his ministers to prepare their resignation letters.

Immediately after the change in the line of succession on Jan. 26. King Hussein left to the U.S. suffering a relapse of the

18:00Dubai, Damascus (EK)

22:25 ... London, Damascus (BA)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

07:50 Aqaba (arriving at QALA)

10:30 Tel Aviv (arriving at QALA)

16:00. Aqaba (arriving at Marka

17:45 Haifa (arriving at QAIA)

18:45 Tel Aviv (arriving at QAIA)

DEPARTURES

-----Amsterdam (KL)

-----Rome (AZ)

18:40

18:45

19:05

20:25

23:55

..Aden (TY)

..Istanbul (TK)

..Beirut (ME)

...Kiev (6U)

...Paris (AF)

..Tel Aviv (LY)

...Lamaca(CY)

...Bucharest (RO)

....Cario (MS)

Speculation Tarawneh's readiness to tender his resignation

was never denied, and in a live interview with the London-based Television on Friday, the premier seemed to confirm the thesis that his team is on stand-by awaiting the King's sig-

"I have not submitted : my resignation, but I am ready at any time to obey any directives from the King," he said.

Tarawneh, who took office on Aug. 20, 1998. is heading the Kingdom's 84th government since 1921.

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St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 5920740 Assemblies of God Church Tel. St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4621366

Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811. St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751. Amman International Church Tel. 5865897

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404 The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 5811295 Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932 St. John the Baptist at De la

Salle College Tel. 5661757 Church of the Annunciation Tcl. 4637+40 Greek Orthodox Church Tel.

Church of Presentation. Swei-Ech Tel 5920146 The Uniate Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190 Evangelical Free Church Tel.

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052 Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331 The American Orthodox Church Tel. 477526!

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Moderate weather conditions will prevail during the day becoming cool at night and winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman	05/17
Agaba	12/23
Deserts	0419
Jordan Valley	10/2
•	

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 17, Agaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 24 per cent. Agaba 25 percent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following

Madaha ...04/16 Petra ...05/16

NUMBERS NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:	
Dr. Yousef Rashid	487
Dr. Jum'a Aba Dhi	ab47
Dr. Khalil Jhali	47
Dr. Walid Al Masri	56

Firas Pharmacy5661912 Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730 Mayadah Pharmacy5537004 Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy .5536169

Dr. Issam Al Salik(02)246858 Fou'ad Pharmacy .(02)275360

Dr. Walid Halaseh (09)982799 Palestine Pharmacy..(09)983562

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre......4637111 Civil Defence Department .5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue4630341 Civil Defence Emergency......199 Rescue Police.. 192, 4621111, 4637777 ...4775121 Highway Police5343402 Traffic Police..... ..4896390 Public Security Dept......4630321 Hotel Complaints____5605800 Price Complaints......5661176 Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467 Amman Municipality Complaints4787111 Telephone Information (directory assistance) Overseas Calls0132 Central Ammun Telephone Repairs Abdali Tel. Repairs.....5661101 Jordan Television4773111 ...47741115680100 Water Authority J. Electricity Authority ...5815615 Electric Power Co......4636381

HOSPITALS

RJ Flight Information....44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport44-53200

AMMAN: The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery5921199 The Islamic, Abdli5666131/7

Hussein Medical Centre...5856856

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR Khalidi Maternity... Akileh Maternity.......4642441/2 Jabal Amman Maternity....4642362 Malhas, J. Animan.4636140 Palestine, Shmeisani5607071 Shmeisani Hospital Jordan Hospital5607550 University Hospital5353444 Al-Munsher Hospital .5667227/9 Al-Ahli, Abdali5664164/6 Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3 Al-Bashir 4775111/26 Army, Marka 4891611/15 Queen Alia Hospital......5157100 Amal Hospital......5607155 Al Amal Cancer Centre ..5353000

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital .(09)983323 Zarga National Hospital. (09)900560 Ibn Sina Hospital(09)986731 Al Hikma Modern Hospital

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555 Roman Catholic Hospital ...(02)272275 Ibn Al Nafees Hospital ...(02)7101372, (02)7103101 Rosary Sisters Hospital(02)7102831. (02)7102011 Speciality Hospital(02)7103100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)2040111

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport (44)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 44 (52700). Information on Royal Wings flights can be supplied on phone 4875201-5

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
06:35Bangkok, Doha (RJ)
08:25Bombay (RJ)
08:35Jeddah (RJ)
08:50Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:00Beirut (RJ)
09:50 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:45New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:15Madrid (RJ)
18:50 London, Graz (RJ)
19:30Paris, Geneva (RJ)
20:10Rome, Athens (RJ)
20:25Frankfurt, Graz(RJ)
22:00 Athens, Brussels (add) (RJ)
22:50Victoria, Auptha (RJ)

00-0	
08:25	Bombay (RJ)
08:35	Jeddah (RJ)
08:50	Dhahran, Riyadh (RI)
	Beirut (RJ)
09:50	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
16:45	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
18:15	Madrid (RJ)
18:50	London, Craz (RJ)
19:30	Paris, Geneva (RJ)
	Rome, Athens (RJ)
20:25	Frankfurt, Graz/RJ)
22:00	Athens, Brussels (add) (RJ)
22:50	Vicana, Aqaba (RI)
03:15	Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights

Airport) (RW)

11:25Tunis, Casablanca (RI) 11:30 ...Amsterdam, New York (RJ) 12:15 London (RJ) 20:30Jeddah (RJ) 20:35New Delhi (RJ) 21:00Aḥu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ) 21:15Damascus (RJ) 22:30 Bangkok (RJ) 22:45 _____Sansa (RJ) 23:45Cairo (RJ) 00:10Kuala Lumpur. Jakarta (RJ)

07:10	Frankfurt (LH)
13:30	Aden (TY)
15:35	
19:00	Dubai (EK)
19:40	Kiev (6U)
20:00	Beirut (ME) ;
21:10	Tel Aviv (LY)
21:40	Cairo (MS)
00:35	Amsterdam (KL)
0):35	Bucharest (RO)
03:00	Rome (AZ)
	-

Other Flights

Royal Wings (RW) Flights 08:15 Tel Aviv (arriving from QAIA) (RW)

08:30 Aqaba (from Marka Airport) (RW) 14:30...Haifa (from Marka Air-

port) (RW) 16:30 Tel Aviv (from Marka Airport)(RW) 20:30Aqaba (from QAIA) (RW) Jordania ome – Je**rdan** Og Royal **Com** ः भारतस्य स्टब्स् men condo

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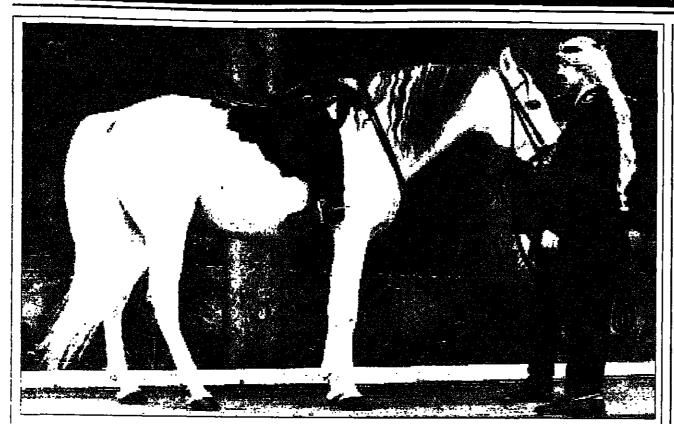
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19. February 14, 15.



Amru draws wonder from King Hussein's admirers

Royal

Princess

Princess Eman.

By Dana Charkasi

AMMAN — The Arabian horse, that earliest improved breed of horse, is valued by equestrians in the world over for its speed, stamina, beauty and intelligence.

The Arabian breed was first mentioned in 400 BC and is said to have stemmed from five mares given to the Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) by his follow-

While the world was transfixed by the funeral cortege of His Majesty King Hussein on Monday, a riderless white stallion, which was led into the procession, drew wonder.

Amru, as this stallion is called, was King Hussein's favourite horse.

Foaled in the Royal Hashemite Stables in 1984, Amru comes from the Kehilan Krush, one of the seven Arabian horse breeds of the Ara-

rested all the way to the bian peninsula. He was prepared for the grave site where the late funeral festivities by two King was laid to rest last of King Hussein's daugh-ters, both equestrians Monday.

In keeping with that same tradition, Amru was not returned to his own stable — the stallion is now kept at the Jafar Stables of HRH Princess Zein Bint Al Hussein.

Nearing the King's final resting place, Amru reared up on his hind legs, as if in a final salute to his master.

Demand for dollar remains normal

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — Banker and money changers reported on Saturday a normal demand for the dollar and other foreign currencies after business resumed following the week-long period of public mourning.

The dollar lost against the dinar, reaching its average exchange value after a slight rise earier last week due to public concern about the King's deteriorating health.

The dollar's closing price on the market ranged from 711-712 fils.

"The minute difference between the sell and buy price of the dollar is an indication of the market's stability," said Mufleh Agel, regional manager of the Arab Bank.

However, bankers attribute the demand for the dollar to different reasons. The smooth transition of power from His Majesty King Hussein and His Majesty King Abullah was a major factor in stabilising the local market and assuring Jordanians as well as their neighbours of financial stability, bankers said.

"The transfer of power has been very smooth. ensuring political as w .. s economic stability in the country," said Akel.

"Another reason is the efficiency of the Central Bank's monetary policy," added Akel.

The Central Bank has reserved around \$100 million in cash in order to meet the market's demands. Jordan's foreign currency reserves stand at \$1.2 bil-

Jordanians were assured last week when promises of foreign aid to Jordan started raining down from the international community.

American President Bill Clinton said he would request that Congress urgently grant Jordan \$300 million to Jordan. The United Arab Emirates also said it would deposit a yetundisclosed amount of money in the CBJ to bolster confidence in the dinar.

According to bankers, the

deposit will range from \$250-\$400 million for at

least five years. The International Monitory Fund added its voice to the chorus of concern and

bility of extending new credits to Jordan, or giving the green light to creditor countries to reschedule Jordan's debts. The credit is expected to be around \$250 million, according to one

banker. Other countries also have promised to send aid, but have not specified the amount or the manner in which the aid will be extended.

Iraq, Jordan's primary bilateral trading partner, also has assured Jordan that it will continue exporting oil to the Kingdom as usual.

Earlier this month, money changers and bankers feared a run on the dollar after unpromising news about King Hussein's health. Some money changers reported that demand was slightly up, while bankers said that they had not noticed any unusual

purchasing activity.

Last summer, when the King left the country for the United States for treatment of a non-Hodekins lym-

Jordan witnessed a capital flight of approximately \$400 million in a matter of

"People last summer were unsure about the future of the country after the King's sudden departure, which explains the panic buying," said an official from the Housing Bank who spoke under condition

anonymity. Jordan's dinar lost around 10 per cent of its value in front of the shekel earlier this month in occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank, after international news agencies leaked reports about the King's deteriorating health. But bankers and exchangers blamed the phenomenon on panic buying in the occupied areas, when Jordanians banks had closed last Friday for the Islamic holiday.

Jordanians call at Royal Court

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanians called at the Royal Court Saturday to sign a special register expressing their condolences on the death of King Hussein, who died last Sun-

Visitors who came to the Royal Court to sign the register pledged allegiance to King Abdullah Ben Hussein and the Hashemite Throne.

The register will be available to the public from 10 a.m. until 12 noon daily from Feb. 13 to March 18.

The Federation of Jordanian Labour Unions Saturday issued a statement expressing Jordanian labourers' deep grief on the passing of King

legacy of great achievements and had supported Jordanian labourers, whom he considered nation's backbone in view of their role in construction and development. He forged legislation on the social security system to ensure labourers' security and played an active role in organ-

ising the relationship between

employees and employers,"

said the statement. The federation said Jordanian labourers pledge to hon- 🗸 our the King and his legacy by protecting the country's achievements and vow to double their production efforts to further the country's

progress and prosperity.

Crown Prince Hamzah in their march. Bishop Samir Qafeeti, head

themselves — Their

With black riding boots

placed backwards in the

stirrups, a British tradi-

tion symbolising the passing away of a leader,

the stallion followed the

gun carriage upon which King Hussein's coffin

Highnesses

Haya and

of the Episcopal Evangelical Church in Jordan and Palestine, also sent a cable of sympathy to King Abdullah and Prince Hamzah Saturday. Chairman of the Federation

of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce Haidar Murad sent a cable to Crown Prince Hamzah expressing sympathy over the passing of King Hussein and pledging alle-giance to the Hashemite Throne.

"We renew our lovalty to the Throne as we forge ahead behind the Hashemite leadership towards the attainment of The federation pledged to further progress and prosper-

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hamzah on Saturday received a cable from French President Jacques Chirac in which he expressed his condolences on the passing of King Hussein. He said King Hussein was a close friend which he lost and that the King will be always remembered for his endeavours to

attain peace. President Chirac voiced his country's support to Jordan and expressed his congratulations to Prince Harnzah on his appointment as Crown Prince.

Prince Hamzah received a congratulatory cable from Chinese Deputy President Hu Tao in which he

"King Hussein has left us a support King Abdullah and ity for Jordan," said Murad. Abu Nimah lectures American students at conference in honour of King Hussein

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut (AP) — King Abdul-lah, will carry on his father's efforts to bring about peace in the Middle East, Jordan's ambassador to the United Nations told American students at a conference honouring the late monarch.

King Hussein laid the groundwork for his eldest son to make a smooth transition into power, Ambassador Hasan Abu Nimah said Friday. Saying it would be practically impossible" to shake Jordan's strength in the region. Abu Nimah said Jordan's government will remain stable despite shiftKing's death.

"The institutions he built in Jordan, the principles he set, the noble goals he set in his life for serving are still alive." he said. "His son ... will carry the banner with the same confidence and strength, and the march toward building peace will continue."

Abu Nimah's comments on the change in power came in a speech to about 75 college students at a mock Middle East peace summit at Yale University.

The organisers of the event saluted King Hussein, who died Sunday

ing political forces in the Middle East following the from cancer at age 63, with a moment of silence. In the conference programme, they included a tribute that noted Hussein's efforts to bring peace between Israel

and the Palestinians.

College students from across the country attended the conference, which was designed as a learning experience for those interested in international diplomacy. During the simulated summit, students were assigned to represent differing political interests in the Middle East.

They negotiated on rights issues. human regional security and tertrade, Jerusalem and holy sites, Palestinian statehood and refugees, in an effort to reach a peace accord.

Joseph Miller, 23, a senior from the University of Maryland, is an American Jew, but he represented the Palestinian Authority at the conference.

"It's more of a role-playing exercise than actual practical experience," he said. "As American Jews, we feel strongly in a certain way, but we've never felt personal danger, so we don't have an emotional stake in it the way Israeli

Students host silent procession for King Hussein

By Susan Resheq

AMMAN --- Over 6,000 students and employees at the state-run University of Jordan Saturday participated in a silent procession dedicated to "the soul of His

Majesty King Hussein."
President of the University of Jordan Walid Ma'ani, accompanied by the university's colleges deans, university teachers, employees and students took part in the solemn ceremony that started from the university clock tower — located near the Linguistics and Languages Centre — and headed towards the Business and Administration Col-lege to Al Sharia College and back.

Participants began the procession by reading the Fatiha — the first surah (verse) of the Koran — for the soul of

His Majesty King Hussein.

Ahmad Awaisheh, a university teacher at the Sharia college, eulogised the King's achievements in building a prosperous country in the face of many challenges, and talked about his charis-

"He was our great teacher and father at the same time," said Awaisheh.

Yousef Ali, the director of the Islamic that under King Hussein's rule, Jordan became a well-known country, seeking peace in the world.

Ali asked students to pray for him and to ask God "to give our great King Hussein a place in paradise. He was not just a king, he was a friend and father for all the Kingdom's people. He worked hard all of his life to ensure a safe life for all Jordanians and Arabs."

'Student Zaid Shraideh said, "A great number of people gathered today in this solemn ceremony. All of us are very sad to lose the King. He was our teacher. All students and university employees participated and expressed their sad feelings, which show our true love for His

Majesty." "Even students in opposition parties and foreigners at the university participated today in the solemn ceremony. marking the great sadness obvious throughout the university," said student

Qutaibah Qudah. The group carried black flags, pictures of King Hussein and many plac-

ards during the procession.

Some read, We Will Never Forget You, King Hussein" or "All Genera-

tions Will Remember You." All pledged support for and allegiance to His Majesty King Abdullah.

American Christians wonder what price U.N. policy on Iraq?

By Hind-Lara Mango

AMMAN - After eight years of emppling United Nations-imposed economic senctions on Iraq, the people and children of a once proud nation continue to struggle against a war which for them has not ceased between bembings.

Omar is a six-year-old Iraqi buy who was not even born when the Gulf crisis broke out in 1990. His parents had waited 11 years to have a baby boy. He is their only son, and today cancer eats away at his brain as he lays suffering at a hospital without the relief of medicine and pain-killers.

His eyes had to be removed after the pressure in his head created by the tumour forced his eyes to bulge," says Margaret Francham from the Bruderhof

Community, an American humanitarian orgnisation.

The 15-year-old girl, along with nine others from her group, have spent the last two weeks in Baghdad cleaning and scrubbing blood- and urine-splattered walls at the Saddam Hussein Paediatric Teaching Hospital.

We took our own disinfectants, since Iraq is banned from importing them, and scrubbed floors and cleaned stained beds," said Kalah Nichols 17.

She told the Jordan Times that the team "worked in the leukaemia ward, cleaning everything and anything that could be cleaned in those rooms.'

"The rooms had not had a thorough cleaning since the war eight years ago," said Iva Jane Shiriky another member of the ten-member delegation

The Bruderhof Communities is an alliance of 3.000 American Christians living in religious communities in the United States and England.

The group travelled to Iraq to make a humanitarian statement and to help Iraqis in whatever manner they could. They returned to Amman with heartbreaking images of a people forced to suffer a war which for them has not ended."

According to the Iraqi Ministry of Health an average of 6,000 children below five years of age die in Iraq every month because of the lack of medicine, vaccines, malnutrition and cancer, now the number one child-killer.

Doctors say they have noted a definite increase in the number of leukaemia cases among Iraqi children - cancer they say is caused by chemical warfare and

depleted uranium from the bombings during the second Gulf War in 1991. The infant mortality rate for

under-fives has increased 16fold during the eight-year-old sanctions, health ministry officials say. The Saddam Hussein Hos-

pital, once pristine, is a shadow of its former reputation as the leading hospital in Iraq. Each room accommodates as many as eight children, who are delivered from even the most remote areas of Iraq for cancer treatment. As neces-Sary medicaments are unavailable, these children almost inevitably succumb to the killer-disease.

"The bombing and economic sanctions are a crime that cry to heaven," said Deborah Swinger, a Bruderhof member. "We want to extend the hand of peace and love to the people of Iraq." said Deborah Swinger a Bruderhof day is vital. According to the member.

The United Nations "oilfor-food programme" stipulates that Iraq is allowed to sell \$5.2 billion worth of crude oil every six months to buy basic food and medicaments; a ceiling Iraq has been unable to meet due to the collapse of prices on world markets and the deterioration of its oil production facilities that cannot be maintained owing to the sweeping sanctions.

Approximately eight million tonnes of supplies have arrived in Iraq since the fifth phase of the "oil-for-food" began two months ago. "Economic sanctions

should not be used as a political weapon against a country and its people," said Swinger upon her return from Iraq. Swinger said that for the children of Iraq each passing

team, the hospital's only chance to fight off death from these suffering children is to administer blood transfu-

"We saw mothers standing in constant vigil over their dying children. Shiriky said. Prior to the sanctions, medicine was free at the Saddam Hussein Hospital. Now, due to its scarcity, parents have to

pay for it. Many Iraqis sell part of their food rations to pay their children's hospital bills. The average monthly wage of a civil servant in Iraq is worth \$5 as a result of the collapse in the local currency under sanctions.

"Some mothers tried to comfort their children by cooking for them in their rooms, said Nichols, who like her colleagues, was wearing a long chequered dress and plain head scarf. Those who could not afford to bring in food were offered hospital stew and rice. The food rations they get

lack vitamins and minerals, it's just not enough for each person," said Mark Clement, a team member.

In December, rations of powdered milk were increased for both adults and infants. Iraq receives wheat, rice, sugar, tea, vegetable oil, soap and detergent.

Despite their sufferings, Iraqis cling to their faith. "We noticed the incredible

faith and tolerance these people had," noted Swinger, explaining that despite the fact that the team was American, the Iraqis treated them with respect.

"Iraqis respect and regard human beings with great esteem. They don't have any prejudices like people in

America," said Swinger. Swinger visited Iraq nearly four years ago and compares the situation then to what she

saw this week. "The situation is deteriorating, it is completely run down, sad, and dirty," she

She noticed how the number of children begging in the streets had increased people's clothes looked warn, cars bore cracked windshields, dents and belch

exhaust fumes. "With the bombings [last] December, electricity has been cut off for three hours at night and another three during the day," Swinger points

Economic sanctions can only be lifted when arms inspectors have verified that Iraq no longer possesses weapons of mass destruction.

Bhutto urges Indo-Pakistan

PEace

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Pakistan's main opposition leader Benazir Bhutto Saturday called on leaders of India and Pakistan to make peace and declare South Asia a region free from nuclear weapons and

Addressing a conference parliamentarians from the two countries, Bhutto urged India and Pakistan to "adhere quickly" to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) "jointly or

They should also agree to a moratorium on fissile material production, resist development, flight testing and storage of ballistic weapons and strengthen export controls on nuclear

technology, she said. "Engage in dialogue not only to talk but to make peace," Bhutto told some 100 MPs, including 37 from India, on the last day of the two-day meeting, which precedes a visit to Pakistan by Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. Vajpayee is due in Lahore

on Feb. 20 on the inaugural run of a cross-border bus service for wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

Bhutto warned of grave economic consequences if the two nations failed to break away from their 50-

Despite "nuclear bravado" the two "need to face the reality that we are economic pygmies on the world stage, and have a population base of 1.3 billion of the world's poorest people, with the worst standard of living," she said.

"If we close our borders and live in the past, our region risks suffering a fate similar to the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and other such al human rights monitors.

"Both of our nations must step forward, understanding the threat to our people, our region, and the entire world, and declare South Asia a nuclear free and mis-

sile free zone," the opposition leader said.

Bhutto said she would admit she followed a "path of hawkishness" during her two terms as prime minister in 1988-90 and 1993-96, but added "that was before India and Pakistan shook the world with their nuclear

Echoing the position of the government, she stressed the need to tackle and resolve the dispute over Kashmir, the Himalayan region divided between Pakistan and India and claimed by both.

"All of our problems, all of our disputes, all of our disagreements can be resolved quickly to mutual satisfaction if we address the question of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The issue... is a problem that has brought us to war before and could very well bring us to war again, this time with the most catastrophic consequences." she said.

She dismissed opposition "compromise" by extremists in both coun-

The stakes, my friends, are much too high to let our policy be driven by our political margins. It is time that our policy be driven by reason, and by our commitment to our children's future."

She said a resolution of the issue must take into account political desires of the people of the strifestrong former princely

Bhutto called for a "dramatic reduction of the nearly 600,000 (Indian) troops now stationed in Kashmir, ceasing "all forms of torture, intimidation and extrajudicial killings" and opening Kashmir to internation-

She promised to "vigorously pursue" in Pakistan a dialogue with India for open borders between two parts of Kashmir and talks for mutual arms reduction and redeployment of forces.



Police use batons to break up a protest march by Communists demonstrating in New Delhi against the killing of 11 landless farmers by an outlawed militia in the eastern state of Bihar. The Bihar state government was sacked by New Delhi over the massacre (AFP photo)

Indian opposition, media divided over sacking of state government

NEW DELHI (AFP) India's centre-left political groups Saturday broke ranks with the main opposition party to flay the Hindu nationalists for sacking a provincial gov-emment after a massacre of landless farmers.

Half-a-dozen opposition accused Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of bias after his cabinet dismissed Friday the local govemment in the crime-prone eastern state of Bihar.

The decision came a day after an outlawed militia of rich landlords shot dead 11 poor villagers at an isolated hamlet for alleged links with Maoist guerrillas, and vowed to carry out further killings. Indian President K.R.

Narayanan, who in September had resisted an earlier attempt to sack the Bihar government, signed an order late Friday sacking the 18-month-old state administration.

Bihar, with a population of nearly 100 million people, is

reputedly India's most lawless state. Maoist guerrillas are active in the province, organising the rural poor to fight for

higher wages. The simmering poor-rich tensions has turned Bihar into a killing field, with private armies of landlords repeatedly massacring defenceless villagers sympathetic to the Maoists.

Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi, an illiterate mother of nine, called her sacking an assault of democracy and accused the Hindu nationalists of violating constitutional norms.

She received quick support from the rest of India's centreleft opposition, some of which denounced the sacking although they are opposed to Rabri Devi's scandal-hit administration.

Communist leader Jyoti Basu, chief minister of the neighbouring state of West Bengal, described the federal government move as "reprenationwide protests.

Former prime minister Chandra Shekhar warned the Bihar government's ouster could "trigger sharp reactions in the state which would be painful and unfortunate." Rabri Devi's maverick hus-

band Laloo Prasad Yadav, who despite quitting as Bihar's chief minister in 1997 for corruption remained the de facto ruler of the state, appealed for street protests.

A fierce foe of Hindu nationalists. Laloo Prasad said Thursday's murder of 11 poor villagers was masterminded by his rivals to prepare the ground for the government's

But the main opposition Congress party, led by Italianborn Sonia Gandhi, reacted differently, saying Rabri Devi had lost the right to rule Bihar for failing to prevent a series of massacres.

"There was no other alternative." Congress general secre-

tary Sushil Shinder Kumar said here. "Law and order (in the state) was totally out of control."

Federal Information and Broadcasting Pramod Mahajan, a Hindu nationalist, justified the government decision, saying Bihar had become a haven for He said since Laloo Prasad

became chief minister in 1990. Bihar had witnessed "5,000 murders, 3,000 attacks by bandits, 1,000 rapes and 2,500 kidnappings on an average every year." The Indian media wel-

comed Rabri Devi's ouster. "After the latest carnage, few people will doubt that the (Bihar) government had lost its right to rule," The Hindustan Times said, calling

the sacking "inevitable."
"Good riddance," said The Indian Express, while The Hindu said Bihar's rulers had abdicated their moral authori-

China says elements of H. Kong legal ruling a mistake

grants come to Hong

Kong, they are first main-

land residents and they

have to abide by the law of

the mainland. They cannot

leave without approval

from mainland authori-

Leung said officials from

both the mainland and

Hong Kong's immigration

department will discuss

how immigrants who have

already been given the right of abode "will arrive

(in Hong Kong) in an

Responding to questions

on how the dispute would

be resolved, Leung said

we need time to study

this. We are just trying to

understand the situation

right now. We need discus-

sion on how to solve this."

China's objections to the court ruling have raised

fears among Hong Kong

legislators and senior busi-

ness leaders over the terri-

tory's judicial and legal

Executive Tung Chee-

Hwa had sought to calm

those fears in sending

Leung to defuse the grow-

Leung said that since

Hong Kong's mini-consti-

tution, the Basic Law, has

only been in place for 20

independence.

ing dispute.

Hong Kong

ties," she added.

orderly manner.

TAIPEI, Taiwan (AP) -China's top negotiator could China in October. put off a plan to visit Taiwan amid escalating diplomatic and military disputes between the two rivals, a politician said Saturday. Lawmaker Feng Hu-Hsiang

said Wang Daohan also might not make the visit in May, as Taiwan has hoped, because Taipei has refused to discuss with him how to proceed with political talks with China.

"Mr. Wang would not visit in May and might not even come anytime this year." Feng told reporters one day after he returned from Beijing where he met Wang's deputy Tang Shubei.

Feng's tiny New Party favours reunification with

Wang, head of the semi-official Association for Relations across the Taiwan Straits, was to return a visit his counter-

Columbia (AP) — A rescue

tug towed a Greek-owned

freighter to the safety of deep

waters while another tug

towed a Liberian-registered

vessel to the sheltered side of

help as they drifted helplessly

off the northwest coast of

Vancouver Island because of

The Greek-owned, Korean-

operated Hanjin Elizabeth had

been towed about 30 kilome-

tres offshore when the towline

parted, a spokesman for the Victoria Rescue Co-ordina-

Both ships had called for

Vancouver Island.

engine problems.

part, Koo Chen-fu, made to

Disputes seen hampering

Taiwan, China dialogue

Also Saturday, the Chinese negotiating body wrote its counterpart, the Straits Exchange Foundation, that it would send a deputy to Taiwan in March to discuss Wang's visit. But the visit has become a

thorny question as China has requested to arrange for Wang and Koo to discuss future political talks, which Taiwan has rejected.

Feng said Taiwan's plans to participate in a U.S.-sponsored regional missile defence system has angered Chinese leaders.

They view this as a severe provocation." Feng said. He quoted Tang as saying Taiwan and China should hold talks to end their hostilities rather than let foreign countries meddle in their internal affairs.

Taiwanese military officials

Two drifting ships rescued

A larger tug was called to

assist, but in the meantime,

the Hanjin Elizabeth's crew

appeared to have repaired the

vessel's engine so a further

tow might not be necessary,

The Caria, registered in

Island,

Liberia, was being towed to

the sheltered side of

The Canadian Coast Guard

and search and rescue officials

had feared the two huge carri-

ers might run aground. But

howling winds and treacher-

the spokesman said.

Vancouver

spokesman said.

off Canada's west coast

say they are studying joining the system known as Theatre Missile Defence, because China has deployed ballistic missiles targeting the island. China was also outraged as

Taiwan set up diplomatic ties with Macedonia, forcing Beijing to sever ties with the former Yugoslav republic, Beijing considers Taiwan to

be a renegade province that eventually must be united with the mainland, by force if Taiwan hopes Wang's visit

could lead to resumption of dialogue that China froze in 1995 in anger over what it saw as a covert Taiwanese effort to strive for independence.

While China wants to move on to political issues. Taiwan wants to continue talks about less sensitive, mundane issues to nurture trust needed for the

ous seas abated enough for a

rescue attempt in Queen

Charlotte Sound, which sepa-

rates Vancouver Island from

Five tugs from Canada and

the United States were used in

the rescue. The 250-metre-

long Hanjin Elizabeth, with

24 people aboard, was en

route to Seattle from Tokyo,

loaded with containers. It

reportedly sustained severe

damage in the engine room.

The 170-metre-long Caria.

with 20 people aboard, had

denarted with a load of

Vancouver Island pulp bound

Queen Charlotte Island.

BEIJING (AFP) - Hong thousands of Kong Justice Secretary Elsie Leung said Saturday Chinese officials told her a time of recession. elements of a landmark

Hong Kong court ruling on mainland children were "a mistake" and should be "corrected." Leung said the Chinese officials had questioned the Hong Kong court's interpretation of legisla-

tion drawn up by China's parliament, the National People's Congress (NPC). "The mainland is most concerned about the part of the ruling that touches on the role of the NPC and

the NPC Committee," Standing she told reporters here after meeting with mainland offi-

"They are very concerned and are questioning the ability of the court to interpret the actions of the NPC Standing Committee.

"They think this is against the constitution and the Basic Law and that this mistake has to be corrected," she added.

Last month's ruling by Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal gave the right of abode to mainland children born to Hong Kong permanent residents irrespective of whether the parents were married or had residents' status at the time of their children's birth.

It angered mainland legal experts and officials who said the court had overstepped its powers by casting aside legislation made by the NPC.

The ruling opens the way for an influx of tens of migrants to Hong Kong. ing that we run into probstraining public services at

She added the perfor-"They (Chinese offimance of the Hong Kong cials) said the ruling government has shown would bring a large influx "that it has the ability to of immigrants to Hong handle this. Kong and it would put immense pressure on Hong Kong," Leung said. "But before these immi-

"We don't have to worry," she said. Zhen Zuoer, deputy

director of the Hong Kong and Macau Office, echoed Leung's statement saying "this is a 'one-China policy' problem." "Ms. Leung has told you

her impression and what she got from this Beijing trip. We had a very good and harmonious discussion," said Zhen who accompanied Leung to speak with reporters. Leung arrived in Beijing

on Friday and met with the Chinese legal advisers who had criticised the ruling. On Saturday, she met officials of the State Council (cabinet) Hong Kong and Macau Office before returning to Hong

Since Hong Kong reverted to Chinese rule in 1997 around 43,000 child migrants have joined their parents in the territory. About 1,000 children who entered Hong Kong illegally will be allowed to

There are reported to be another 320,000 mainland children of Hong Kong residents awaiting resettlement, but the ruling did not specify whether these children must join the queue of other mainlanders applying to enter Hong Kong under a daily quota of 150.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Blair under pressure to declare genetically modified food safe

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's retailers demanded action from Prime Minister Tony Blair Saturday, accusing his government of sending out confusing signals and failing to allay consumers' fears over genetically modified food. Some of Britain's biggest retailers have written to Agriculture Secretary Nick Brown calling for a clear statement from the government that genetically modified (GM) foods are safe to eat. The move comes after the government Friday resisted pressure to follow other European countries in declaring a moratorium on the commercial exploitation of GM foods. Ann Grain, of the British Retail Consortium, told the BBC Saturday: "The government is now sending out confusing signals to consumers and not allaying consumers fears. They need to be telling the country these products are approved as safe and that they stand by that decision."

French police seize record amount of cocaine

PARIS (AP) - French police have seized a record amount of cocaine - 1.2 metric tonnes - in a raid in a suburb south of Paris, police officials said Saturday. Police initially found 400 kilogrammes of cocaine in a truck during Friday's raid and soon after discovered the rest in a nearby warehouse. Police estimated the street value of the drugs seized at more than one billion francs (about \$180 million). The amount of cocaine seized in Friday's raid surpasses the total found in all of 1998. police said. Seven people, who were not identified but were said to be part of a travelling carnival, were arrest-

Indonesia seeks permission to chase rebels into neighbour territory

JAKARTA (AFP) - Indonesia wants permission to chase separatist rebels in the easternmost province of Irian Jaya who take refuge over the border in neighbouring Papua New Guinea (PNG), an official was quoted as saying Saturday. "If the government of PNG allows Indonesia's security agencies to enter the territory of PNG and cooperation with the PNG security apparatus can be established, the scope of movement for the guerrillas will be narrowed." Irian Jaya provincial government spokesman Suryanto Sriwardovo told the Antara news agency. He said Jakarta had submitted a request to Port Moresby to launch cross-border military operations but had yet to receive a response, adding the issue was "an agenda priority" for the Indonesian government. Irian Jaya's Free Papua Movement has been fighting for an independent West Papua state in the former Dutch colony of Western New Guinea since it became an Indonesian province in 1963. The United Nations gave its recognition to Indonesia's sovereignty there in 1969. Last month Indonesian President B.J. Habibie said he would travel to Irian Jaya to meet local representatives but no date has been fixed for the visit. The provincial government stressed the visit would be dedicated to economic development and would not address local calls for independence or autonomy. Two weeks ago Jakarta in a surprise move offered independence to the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, similarly beset by separatist violence, if an offer of autonomy is turned down.

KLA frees 8 ethnic Albanians

PRISTINA, Yugoslavia (AP) — The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) has released eight ethnic Albanians held on suspicion of collaborating with Serbs, a spokesman for international peace monitors said Saturday. The eight, detained after a mass funeral for victims of the Racak killings, were freed late Friday night, said Jorgen Grunnet, spokesman for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The detentions reflected high tension surrounding Thursday's funeral and continuing friction between ethnic Albanian rebels and others Kosovo Albanians deemed loyal to Serb authorities in the separatist province of Serbia. "The reason for their detention was to ensure security at the funeral," said Kosovo Press, the KLA's news agency. "The eight were suspected of working for the Serb police." Two of those detained are in the Serb police reserves, it said. There were no immediate reports of new clashes in the province Saturday the one-week mark of Kosovo peace talks in Rambouillet, France. Friday, in the first reported clash since peace talks opened, the Serbian Media Centre said a guerrilla was killed and two policemen wounded after the rebels fired on a police patrol near Glogovac in central Kosovo. There was no confirmation from the OSCE, which has monitored an unofficial cease-fire in effect since October.

Janet Jackson separates from longtime boyfriend

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Janet Jackson's musical question. "What have you done for me lately?" may have finally hit home: she and her longtime romantic interest have split up. The 32-year-old singer and Rene Elizondo Jr. have separated, according to a statement released Friday by the pop diva's publicist, Lindsay Scott Management. The couple, who had a "personal relationship" for 13 years, planned to continue their friendship. the statement said. Ms. Jackson, the youngest daughter of the celebrated musical family that also produced pop mega-star Michael Jackson, was married to singer James DeBarge for about a year when she was in her late teens. Shortly after her divorce, she and Elizondo began dat-

2 dissidents detained in central China

BEIJING (AP) - Two dissidents linked to a banned opposition political party were detained by police Saturday in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, a human rights group reported. Chen Zhonghe, chairman of the Hubei province branch of the China Democracy Party, was taken away by two police Saturday afternoon. Xiao Shichang, secretary general of the party's Hubei branch, was working in his small shop when three police officers detained him, the Information Center of Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said. Family members said the two men had not returned home by Saturday evening. The Hong Kong-based group said both men had been preparing for two meetings by dissident groups next month in Wuhan, Hubei's provincial capital. China's communist rulers launched a crackdown on the China Democracy Party more than two months ago. Six party members have been jailed, the three most influential leaders to sentences of 11 years or more. Activists have defied the crackdown, announcing the formation of new party branches and making plans for gatherings despite police warnings.

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BRIEF

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Part -

President Bill Clinton is

American ground troops to a NATO peacekeeping

force in Kosovo if Serbs

and ethnic Albanians over-

come steep differences and

reach a political settlement.

Clinton's decision, which

he was disclosing in his

weekly radio address

Saturday, was hinted at

Friday night by Sen. John

Warner, chairman of the

Senate Armed Services

Committee, and then con-

firmed by a senior adminis-

while, was heading for

peace talks between the two

warring sides. The parties

have an informal deadline

of Feb. 20 for reaching an

Officials said it was not a

foregone conclusion an

reached despite the threat of

NATO military interven-

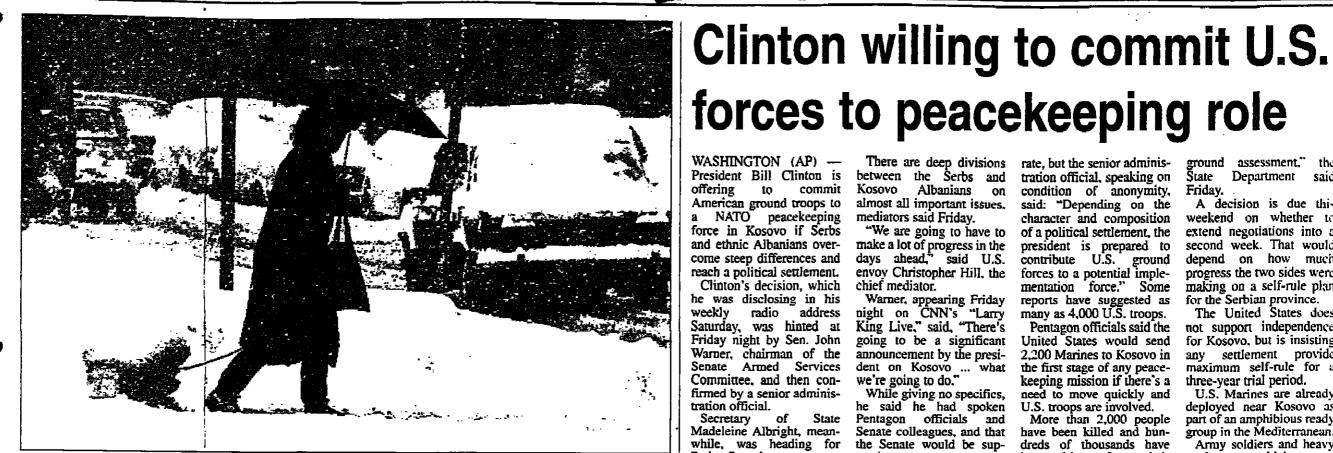
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A Sofia resident braves the freezing temperatures as she walks through heavy snow with her dog, after a snowstorm hit the Bulgarian capital and the rest of the western part of the country (AFP photo)

Heavy snow sweeps central Europe

Saturday.

routes.

said.

and certain cross-border

Deutschkreuz, were closed

to heavy vehicles, officials

Further south in Bulgaria,

the snow also disrupted traf-

fic and cut electricity to

around 166 towns and vil-

lages, the BTA agency

including

VIENNA (AFP) --- Heavy snow overnight blocked roads across central Europe. disrupting traffic and cutting off towns and villages.

In Hungary, hundreds of vehicles were stranded after snow blocked the main north-east highways.

More than 50 roads were impassable in the region, leaving more than 200 towns and villages cut off, the MTI agency reported.

Border crossings at Lonya and Barabas, at the Ukraine

froatier, were closed by the on all major roads in the snow, along with a major route into Slovenia, MTI

Forecasters predicted more snow Saturday. Friday, Hungarian police said six people had died in the cold snap sweeping cen-Europe

Wednesday. Around 300 troops have been drafted in to help with snow-clearing and rescue

Traffic was also disrupted reported.

east of neighbouring Austria also without water, while 17 were without telephones Long queues developed at after snow brought down

the Austria-Hungary border The Black Sea port of Burgas was closed by strong winds Saturday and the snow disrupted flights to and from Sofia airport.

Meanwhile in France. long traffic queues were reported between Lyon and the Alps Saturday as thousands of holidaymakers headed for ski resorts.

Two battle for Nigeria's main party's presidential ticket

JOS, Nigeria (AFP) — Former military ruler Olusegun Obusanjo arrived Saturday in the town of Jos for the convention of Nigeria's largest political party, hoping to be picked as candidate in presidential

Bartling the 61-year-old retired general for the nomination of the centre-left Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is a 66-year-old former civilian vice president. Alex Ekwueme. with the elections due in two

Ekwueme held the number a 1976 coup. two post from 1979 to 1983 in the last civilian administration of Africa's most populous nation. Ahead of the PDP congress, rivalry between his camp and those backing Obasanjo has become intense.

Up to 40 million Nigerians will vote next weekend for a two-chamber parliament, and then head back to the polls Feb. 27 to elect a new president.

Nigeria has been ruled by the military for all but four years since the country's first coup d'état in 1966 and this month's elections are aimed at ending that domination.

Early Saturday, with posters from the rival camps plastered over the small hill town, 2,500 convention delegates were being busily wooed by each side, seeking last-minute conveisions of supporters of the

Obasanjo, who as a military man took the surrender of the Ibo forces in Nigeria's 1967-70 civil war, was military number two in the regime of the late Martala Mohammed, killed in

The Yoruba general put down that coup and took charge, promising to hand over to a civilian regime three years later. In doing so, he became the first modern African military leader to transfer power voluntarily to civilians.

After leaving office, and the army. Obasanjo served on a series of international commissions and became increasingly vocal in criticism of subsequent military regimes.

In 1995, he was jailed on trumped up charges of plotting.

a coup against late military leader General Sani Abacha, spending just over three years in detention until he was released last year.

His rival for the ticket, Ekwueme, is a wealthy businessman, an Ibo who was a surprise choice as running mate in the 1979 elections for northern conservative Shehu Shagari. Ibos and Yorubas constitute two of Nigeria's three principal ethnic groups among many, the third being the northem Hausa-Fulani.

A conservative and owner of an architecture practice, Ekwueme earned a rare reputation for honesty in the Shagari administration which was overthrown in 1983 by a popular military coup.

The military administration that then took power set up tribunals to investigate widespread charges of corruption against the Shagari regime but found that, while many had profited, Ekwueme had actually left office a poorer man than he had come in.

As vice president, Ekwuerne

IFB has been issued.

had apparently neglected his business interests, seeing their value fall,

The battle between Obasanjo and Ekwueme for the PDP's nomination has become increasingly bitter in recent

Ekwueme's team has flooded the papers and airwaves with advertisements portraying Obasanjo as an unreformed military man, unable to pick up support in his own southwest region, or the east, and not

overendowed intellectually. Obasanjo's aides have tried to give their man a more statesman-like image, but have not resisted a few low blows at Ekwueme.

After the convention opens, voting is not expected to start until Sunday, and then only after considerable overnight horsetrading by both camps. Five other politicians are offi-

cially still candidates for the ticket but not given any chance by most observers.

strategy MEXICO CITY (AP) -Mexico is unveiling a Sunday to Monday sumnew hi-tech strategy to mit in Merida, on the

try to seal off its borders to drug traffickers when U.S. President Bill Clinton travels Mexico for a summit this weekend.

South Francisco

(Mexico's) national security.'

said.

of 900 kilometres.

"We need to get it quickly and we need to get it on easy terms," he šaid.

Zedillo during the

Yucatan Peninsula. Mexico also plans to hire some 45,000 police officers this year. Many will likely be taught to handle the new equipment in the United States, Labastida said.

Mexico hopes the equipment and new officers will neutralise complaints in the U.S. Congress that Mexico is not cooperating fully in the fight against drugs.

The Clinton administration is due to issue its list of certification recommendations

Congress on March 1. During their two formal meetings, Clinton and Zedillo will also discuss protecting the rights of undocumented workers in the United States. improving cross-border cooperation and environ-

mental protection. The presidents are also expected to review the North American Free Trade Agreement, now in its fifth year. Mexico is now the United States' second largest trading partner, behind Canada.

This will be Zedillo's seventh meeting with Clinton, and the 58th between presidents from the two countries since William Taft met with Porfirio Diaz at the El Paso, Texas, border in

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There are deep divisions rate, but the senior administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity. said: "Depending on the character and composition of a political settlement, the

"We are going to have to make a lot of progress in the days ahead," said U.S. envoy Christopher Hill, the chief mediator.

between the Serbs and

Kosovo Albanians on

almost all important issues.

mediators said Friday.

night on CNN's "Larry King Live," said, "There's going to be a significant announcement by the president on Kosovo ... what we're going to do." While giving no specifics,

he said he had spoken Pentagon officials and Senate colleagues, and that the Senate would be sup-Paris Saturday to assess portive. Asked about Warner's

> comment, National Security spokesman David Leavy said Clinton, in his radio address, would "continue his conversation with the American people about the U.S. national interests and

the stakes in Kosovo." Leavy refused to elaboFriday.

president is prepared to contribute U.S. ground forces to a potential implementation force." Some Warner, appearing Friday reports have suggested as many as 4,000 U.S. troops. Pentagon officials said the

United States would send 2,200 Marines to Kosovo in the first stage of any peacekeeping mission if there's a need to move quickly and U.S. troops are involved.

More than 2,000 people

have been killed and hundreds of thousands have been driven from their homes in clashes in Kosovo between ethnic Albanian separatists and Serbian security forces.

Britain and France are serving as co-hosts for the talks in Rambouillet, France. Albright will meet with Hill, the U.S. ambassador to Macedonia, and "make her own on-theState Department said

A decision is due this weekend on whether to extend negotiations into a second week. That would depend on how much progress the two sides were making on a self-rule plan for the Serbian province.

The United States does not support independence for Kosovo, but is insisting any settlement provide maximum self-rule for a three-year trial period.

U.S. Marines are already deployed near Kosovo as part of an amphibious ready group in the Mediterranean. Army soldiers and heavy equipment, which sometimes take weeks to deploy, would follow Marines to Kosovo as part of a longterm NATO peacekeeping operation, said a Pentagon official, speaking on condition of anonymity. Army troops could come from Europe, Asia or U.S. bases. depending on what type of

sent them across the Capitol to

argue a case that was not strong

enough to meet the constitutional

requirement for removing a

"It has been a long, humiliating

and deeply flawed process."

wrote the Kansas City Star. "But

the Senate finally arrived at the

right place Friday when it decid-

ed against removing President

The Minneapolis Star-Tribune

took aim at prosecutor Kenneth

Starr for his "sex-laden, biased

and deceptive report," and House

Republicans for pushing the case.

members bent on removing a

president had better 1) accuse the

president of impeachable

offences and 2) prove their case.

"This prosecutor and this

In the president's home state of

Arkansas, the Democrat-Gazette

said the impeachment scandal

would forever stain Clinton's

"At least Richard Nixon was

granted a quick pardon before

sentencing himself to a couple of

decades of self-rehabilitation."

the Democrat-Guzette editori-

Jefferson Clinton goes, even

among those who want to cheer

wherever William

legacy, despite his acquittal.

the Star-Tribune wrote.

"Future prosecutors and House

Clinton from office."

President." the Times said.

Mexico to unveil new drug-fighting

The \$500 million strategy requires extensive financial help Washington to smugglers from using Mexico as a corridor to smuggle American drugs into the United States, Interior Secretary Labastida Ochoa said

Labastida said much of the plan was finalised during a quick visit he made this week to Washington. In a radio interview Friday, he said drug trafficking "has become a problem of

Mexico needs to buy sophisticated monitoring and tracking equipment to seal its borders with Guatemala and Belize in the south and the United States to the north, he

"It's not the kind of thing you can buy off the shelf in a drug store." he explained. Some of the radar trackers can simultaneously monitor up to 300 ships, launches or aircraft within a radius

The strategy will be formalised in a so-called "memorandum of understanding" to be signed when Clinton meets with Ernesto

No vindication for Clinton in U.S. newspapers

WASHINGTON (AFP) — If he created the atmosphere that U.S. President Bill Clinton was hooing for vindication after being acquitted by the Senate, he didn't find it Saturday in the editorial pages of the nation's newspapers.

Most echoed American opinion - frowning on Clinton's conduct, but glad he was acquitted in a case many thought should never have been brought.

"It's Over!" screamed the Detroit Press in a banner headline, one day after the president's opponents fell short of the twothirds majority needed to oust him on perjury and obstruction of justice charges.

The Washington Post --- whose investigation of the ...1972. Watergate break-in lead to the resignation of former President Richard Nixon — praised the Senate's decision as "the correct

"That is not, however, any kind House did neither." of vindication worth celebrating for Mr. Clinton, much less for the Constitution," the Post editori-

"It is a simple judgment more mature, perhaps, than principled, and made with every understanding of the ignoble qualities of the man who sits in the Oval Office - that not every offence is worth punishing."

The New York Times called the result a victory for the U.S. Constitution. "the great anchor rock of the Republic, enduring through partisan storms in the Congress, immune in the end to even so large and impredicted a betrayal as a president's dereliction of duty."

condemned Clinton for his behaviour in the scandal over his liaison with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky, now 25.

into taking the case to the Senate.

THE NEW WORLD CLASS AIRLINE FROM THE GULF

Like most papers, the Times

and celebrate, his character and conduct will always be the subtext of his every speech, appearance, and press conference." Post-Herald Birmingham, Alabama --- whose

"Now.

Senator Richard Shelby joined nine other Republicans to vote against the first article of impeachment — accused

history books," wrote the Post-Herald, "But America will recov-"More than any other person. er from what he has done to her."

Judge in mass graves case concerned over government interference

JAFFNA, Sri Lanka (AP) ---A judge presiding over the supervision of a local magease of excavating a mass grave of 300 Tamil civilians allegedly killed by the military has accused the government of interfering in the judicial process, court officials and lawyers said

Saturday. Additional S.A.E. Magistrate Ehanathan has taken exception to a Foreign Ministry statement that set the March

5 exeavation date. Ehanathan told Service Judicial Commission in Colombo Friday that he has set no date for the excavation. He would review the situation on March 5 after hearing the preparations for the digging. court officials said on condi-

tion of anonymity. The judge told the commission, which oversees judicial work, that he considered the ministry's statement an interference.

Wednesday invited human rights groups and journalists to witness the excavation by scientists from two local universities and government

forensics experts under the istrate.

It was not immediately know why the foreign ministry made the statement without consulting the judge. But the announcement coincided with the visit of President Chandrika Kumaratunga to Jamaica to attend the G-15 Summit.

Sri Lanka faces embarrassing situations at international meets over the issue. A site near in the outskirts of Jaffna is believed to contain the bodies of about half

the 600 Tamils who disap-

peared from military cus-

tody after government troops captured the peninsula in early 1996. Jaffna, a Tamil-majority area, was a stronghold of guerrillas fighting for a

homeland for minority

A soldier convicted in July last year of the rape and murder of a family of Tamils The foreign ministry told judges he had helped bury bodies near Jaffna. about 300 kilometres north

of the capital, Colombo. The government first ordered an inquiry in July

into the mass graves allegamajority Sinhalese of distions. But work was criminating against the delayed, the government minority Tamils, a charge says, because of floods and the government denies. Over 57,000 people have difficulties finding specialist

investigators. died in the insurrection The rebels accuse the since 1983.

> SECTION I. INVITATION FOR BIDS ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE WATER AUTHORITY OF JORDAN **INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)** Feb. 8, 1999 96 65 373 KfW Amman II Loan No.:

IFB No.: 6/99/KfW 1. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has received a loan from Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau in Deutsche Marks for the Water Supply of Greater Amman, it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract(s) for which this

2. The Water Authority now invites sealed bids from Bidders in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Federal Republic of Germany (eligible Bidders) for supply and installation of computer hardware and peripherals for the WAJ Amman Governorate computerisation. 3. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect the bidding documents at the office of the Secretary General, Purchasing & Procurement Division, Water Authority, P.O. Box 2412, Amman, Jordan, Tel.: 680100, Tix.: 22439 WAJ JO. Fax: 679143. 4. A complete set of the tender documents may be purchased by any interested eligible Bidder on the submission of a written application to the above and upon payment of a non-refund-

5. All bids must be submitted in separate envelopes, marked "technical" and "financial," be accompanied by a security in the amount of JD5,000 (in words: five thousand Jordan dinars) and must be delivered to the office not later than 1500 hours, Jordan local time, on Monday,

6. Monday, 22/2/99, is the last day set for the purchasing of tender documents.

Acting Secretary General Water Authority

Republicans of mishandling their But the paper accused Republican whip Tom DeLay of "Bill Clinton will pay in the browbeating his party's leaders

Requires Cabin Crew based in Doha, State of Qatar.

international Airline to emerge from experience), be a minimum height the Gulf, invites applications from of 5'2" (157 cm), able to swim, suitably qualified persons in search and have a mature outgoing

of adventure and a fresh challenge. personality. Candidates must be aged

Qatar Airways, the latest years old (with cabin crew airline

Previous experience with an between 20-25 years old (with no airline, hotel or nursing background airline experience) and up to 30 is advantageous.

All interested candidates are required to forward their curriculum vitae along with one full length and one passport sized colour photo to the following address:

Cabin Crew Department

Fax: 9626-5677411 P.O.Box 1803 Amman 11118 Jordan Amman - Jordan

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New faces, new approach

THE YOUNGER generation of Jordanians has high hopes that His Majesty King Abdullah, 37, and one of the world's youngest statesman, will eventually allow them a bigger say in running the affairs of their country and in shaping its future.

Like him, many are more Western-oriented, are Internet literate and realise that Jordan cannot approach the Third Millennium without stronger democratic and balanced institutions to replace a largely patriarchal system.

In their hearts, they know king Abdullah can understand their demands for greater public efficiency, accountability and transparency as he himself faced many headaches from the older generation of politicians and army officers when he tried to instil new ideas or to approach appointments based on merit, rather than the condidate's last name.

Like him, most have watched in vain as cabinets with a few prime ministers and a few dozen ministers had a lifespan of only a year each, making the dispensing of the affairs of the country an impossible task to

And most have seen how intrigue among the old power elite did not often bode well for the overall interests of the country as, most often, they took measures to avenge their predecessors hours after replacing them and joined the opposition ranks minutes after their dismissal. Others resisted change to maintain their social status and power of patronage.

In several recent interviews, King Abdullah voiced his own desire for what he called "comprehensive changes," including new free market reforms and further democratisation. But he also said he was an extension of his father's outlooks and beliefs.

Jordanians do realise that King Abdullah will not embark on changing the cornerstones of the country's foreign and domestic policies.

And they know he will have to strike a delicate balance between keeping some of the current cast of political characters while injecting new blood and ideas through fresh appointees.

But armed with a popular outpouring of allegiance and overwhelming pledges of economic and political support from Arab and other countries, Jordanians believe that now is the time for their King to take tough decisions on the internal front and to mark the start of

While he will not be able to produce a miracle to ease the impact of rising poverty and unemployment, he could definitely start by routing the "pockets" of corruption, untangling the maze of bureaucracy, ensuring equality before the law and increasing state efficiency.

In the next few months, he is expected to try to muster a national consensus regarding demands for changes to the stifling press law and to the one-man. one-vote election law, which many blame on producing a largely tribal and apolitical parliament.

He will also find a way to ease simmering tensions between the government and the Muslim-led opposi-

By no means will it be an easy time and a simple task

The new King will not only need new faces, but more

importantly, a new modern approach to further develop a system based on new blood and a continuity of policies to ensure the stable and modern Jordan his father helped found.

Rana Sabbagh Gargour

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Mahmoud Rimawi said Jordan has the chance to perform an important role in activating Arab political life, especially with the recent support the international community showed the country. If the news that His Majesty King Abdullah will embark on a tour of thanks to those countries which sent condolence delegations is true, this could help improve the Arab situation, especially since it has been proven that the Kingdom enjoys a high position in the world, thanks to His Majesty King Hussein, Rimawi argued. For example, suggested the writer. Jordan can activate the work of a seven-member committee. which was formed by the Arab Ministerial Council, to deal with the Iraqi crisis and end the sanctions. In that regard, the country can do much in coordination and cooperation with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Syria, especially if Imag facilitates the mission to these countries, he added. On the Palestinian-Israeli front, Jordan can support Palestinians in their quest to secure their legitimate rights and gain self-determination, as well as help avoid further problems from the Israeli side. At the same time, Rintawi said, the way is open to develop relations with the Gulf states, especially after their compassionate stand vis-a-vis the Kingdom during the last week, he added.

Al Dustour's Yasser Za'atrch said political liberalisation is in the air and is expected to take place within a few weeks. It must necessarily involve a change in government as a first step towards a serious and a real attempt at reform, said Za'atreh and added that people will be more interested in the Cabinet members than in the government's policy statement. The writer said the Royal directives will impose themselves, but at the same time the nature of the executive team, its vision and agenda will have a weight of its own. According to Za'atreh, there are many qualified figures who, if given the chance, will be more than willing to do their best in the interest of this country. No doubt, he said, political parties, opposing ones in particular, may find themselves closer and more prone to open a dialogue with "open-minded" personalities for the public good. On the other hand, the general amnesty, expected in the course of the other changes, needs a thorough study, taking into consideration possible repercussions, avoiding bias, and it should include political prisoners. Za atteh said.

Sensationalism in economic coverage

IN THEIR reporting on the current situation in Jordan, the Arab and world media shifted their attention from the political and human dimensions of the death of King Hussein to the economic dimension, especially trying to monitor the impact of the psychological shock on economic and financial behaviour of Jordanians. The points of focus being the exchange rate of the Jordan dinar and the prices in the stock exchange.

It is only natural that journalistic coverage may come with lots of mistakes. Some mistakes were made intentionally or for sensational purposes, but the majority were based on lack of information or sheer misunderstanding of

Although foreign correspondents from both the printing press and television networks came here to

look at the foreign media as a source of reliable information and draw conclusions based on what those correspondents reported even though many of them came to Jordan for the first time and know nothing about the basics and workings of the Jordanian economy let alone are in a position to evaluate its viability and degree of resilience.

We should not be dismayed by some of the negative economic coverage seen in the media. The media, by its very nature, looks for negative and bad news. If the situation in Jordan after King Hussein is safe and sound, and everything goes smoothly and it is business as usual, it does not make a good

The correspondent of a major

see, understand, and transmit a American journal called me upon picture, some Jordanians started to arrival in Amman for an appointment. When I asked about the subject matter, her answer was: to find out what is wrong in the Jordanian economy! She was not after the facts, she was after disasters; her concern is about what is wrong.

It would suit the foreign press and TV networks to see a rush on the dollar at the counters of money changers due to panic and high demand, and to see prices of shares drop sharply in the financial market. That would make for interesting stories and eye-catching headlines.

However, the press corps was disappointed, the extra demand on the dollar lasted for two days before it was reversed. The price of the dollar rose by a fraction of one per cent before it was restored

Sunday's **Economic Pulse**



Dr. Fahed Fanek

Amman stock exchange dropped on Saturday February 6, by 1.6 per cent, before it rose on Sunday February 7. The difference of exchange rate on the dollar was to normal. The price index on the not actually more than the equiva-

lent of the usual commissions charged by the banks on normal transactions for legitimate objec-

In general irrational behaviour caused by shock was short-lived, confidence in the institutions was strong enough that the negative impact was minimal and its duration very short.

Yes, we are in a state of shock due to the grave illness of the King and his sad death. After all, he was like a father to the nation. Everyone in Jordan felt that he or she lost a member of his or her own family. Such a shock should influence every aspect of life including economic behaviour. It may cause some to act irrationally, but the fundamentals are right, the institutions are there, functioning properly, and the world is supporting us in every way.

King Hussein, the reconciliator

By Miguel Angel Moratinos

THE LAST time I saw King Hussein, was during the signing of the Wye River mem-orandum in the White House. Faced with an extinguishing life, his face showed serenity, as if the effort of his intervention for the conclusion of the agreement would summarise a life trajectory marked by reconciliation, sense of duty and commitment to his country. His last contribution seemed to go beyond the historical fatalism of the Hashemite dynasty, which was forced to abandon Al Hijaz, to head two new states Iraq and Transjordan — and, eventually, to loose political control over Jerusalem. I then remembered another meeting held in 1995 in the Palace of Aqaba, in which he expressed his bitterness and frustration seeing that so many personal efforts would not be rewarded during his lifetime and fearing not to have his involvement gratified by peace and prosperity in the Middle East.

In spite of the history of his family, country and region, he was always trying to demonstrate hope and joy. Maybe his fight, guided by a willingness of reconciliation and the conviction that peace was possible. could explain his faith in the future. In his last years, all the noble traits of his personality were dedicated to one objective: contributing with all his energy to achieve peace in the Middle East. This explains his intervention in Wye, but also other contributions of equal value, such as his efforts towards bringing together the two major components of the Jordanian population, the East Bankers and the West Bankers and the historical gesture of having offered Jordanian support so Palestinians could attend the Madrid peace conference in

He was a reconciliator in the internal field. He had to face distension and even a coup from certain sectors of the Armed Forces — as the one attempted in 1957 by General Ali Abu Nawar, whom he later forgave and could convert into one of his followers. He reconciled Jordanians and Palestinians, after recovering from one of his reign's most difficult moments, the confrontation with the Palestinian commandos in 1970 and 1971. Later, he was able to build new bridges and establish good relations with Yasser Arafat, in particular, after the visit of a PLO delegation in 1997, the

signing of a confederate agreement in 1985 and, most of all, the decision in July 1988, to sever all juridical and administrative links with the West Bank. This initiative opened the opportunity for the Palestinians

to achieve self-determination. He also reconciled with Israel, against which he had been militarily confronted during the war of 1967, when his country paid a high price in lives and territory. He avoided such confrontation in 1973. As he signed peace in October, 1994 with Prime Minister Rabin in the desert of Wadi Araba. he was not only sealing a diplomatic pact with the government of Israel, he also aimed at consolidating a permanent reconciliation with the entire Israeli population.

But, I believe that one can affirm that this reconciliation trajectory was marked by his own history, by several experiences which he lived through - wars and the sorrow of his own family hit by violence. In 1951, when he was only 15 years old, his grandfather King Abdullah was assassinated while standing next to him. One year later, his reign would begin marked not only by the mentioned confrontations, but also by relations not always easy with his Arab neighbours and with the Western world. At the end of the fifties, serious tensions with Syria, Egypt, as well as Iraq developed after the coup of 1958. He joined the Egyptian-Syrian defence pact and participated next to them in the 1967 war. Old tensions were revived following his decision not to participate in the 1973 war. In those difficult years, he suffered several attacks that he always survived, thanks to his fighting spirit and, in many cases, he showed his talent as a reconciliator.

Although he joined the Arab bloc censuring Egypt's decision to sign peace with Israel, at the beginning of the eighties, he baited the reconciliation with Israel. He actively promoted the establishment of a Arab Cooperation Council, an alliance with Egypt, Iraq, and North Yemen. But, the time when the world would dramatically witness its will for reconciliation, came when, after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, he made great efforts to try to avoid confrontation. King Hussein interpreted his people's feelings, and he sympathised with the Iraqi people — he suffered a lot from the development of the Gulf War. But, there again, he resumed his work in favour of

'King Hussein was one of the Middle East leaders who first understood the new concept of security, promoted by Europe for years; a security based on internal stability through democratisation, economic prosperity, and based on a collective security made possible by the establishment of regional dialogue and cooperation

mechanisms'

peace.
King Hussein was one of the Middle East leaders who first understood the new concept of security, promoted by Europe for years; a security based on internal stability through democratisation, economic prosperity, and based on a collective security made possible by the establishment of regional dialogue and cooperation mechanisms. On one occasion, he mentioned to me the importance he was giving to the European role in a peace process that had to follow the directives defended, since 1980, by Europe. Guided by that spirit, he undertook a reform considered by all as irreversible, and that now will contribute to a normal transition between the two reigns. I know to which extent he was inspired by His Majesty Don Juan Carlos, with whom he maintained an immense friendship and a profound admiration. The democratic elections held in 1989 and 1993, and the consequent reforms, are a proof of it. He introduced with ability the religious sensibilities of Islamic political groups, making them participate in the government system.

Jordan, the Middle East and the world have lost a great leader, a reconciliator and a wise man with great experience, a statesman who knew how to rule in accordance with his time but with a view to the future. whose work is and will be recognised, today and in the coming years. The institutional-construction and the style he imposed during his reign are a base for sta-

bility and progress. On this sad say, we can add his name to

those of the great men who dedicated their o peace. I don't know what is the price paid in the development of his disease because of his fight for peace. I remember the contained emotion of Her Majesty Queen Noor and his son Prince Hamzah in the White House, when the Wye memorancum was signed; it was not only due to the excitement of the moment but also to the great sacrifice realised by the King. Now, all of us working in the peace process, have to harvest his legacy, maintain his reconciliator's spirit and commitment so needed by the Middle East, a region and a peace process owing so much

The writer is the EU's special envoy to the

Ten years of the fatwa on Rushdie

From Michael Jansen

NICOSIA - Ten years ago the Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini pronounced his fatwa condemning the novelist Salman Rushdie to death for apostasy, the punishment imposed according to

There was — and remains — no doubt in the mind of the Muslim World community that Rushdie was — and is — an apostate, a man who abandoned the faith, a man who refused to submit to the will of God.

But, no one would have noticed what he had done if he had not written a novel, The Satanic Verses, which both insulted the Prophet Mohammed and reviled and ridiculed Islam, a book deeply offensive to a billion Muslims.

The Satanic Verses was published on September 26th 1988. On October 5th India banned the book. On November 8th a British literary panel awarded it the prestigious Whithread award. On the 24th the book was banned in South Africa. In January 1989 militant Muslims in the northern British city of Bradford burnt the book. On February 12th rioting broke out in Pakistan, on the 13th protests spread to Kashmir and on the 14th the Ayatollah proclaimed his fatwa without reading Rushdie's book, without making the case for apostasy.

It was the act of a politician rather than a man of religion or a high-ranking Shi'ite cleric. The fatwa as intended to revive the

Revolution," then just ten years old, and to boost the power of the conservative camp in Iran's cleri-cal regime. The fatwa succeeded. It reinvigorated the revolutionary pan-Islamic spirit which had been initially created by Khomeini's "Revolution." Iranians recommitted to the "Revolution." Muslims around the world condemned Rushdie and proclaimed their support for the fatwa. Khomeini undermined liberal clerics, headed by his designated successor Ayatollah Hussein Montazeri, who were calling for an end to domination by the mullahs, the reseparation of church and state and a return to the rule of law.

But when he proclaimed his fatwa, Khomeini, the law-man, took the law into his own hands. He made a mockery of Islamic law, which like its Western counterpart, lays down procedures for with lawbreakers. dealing involves due process and specifies sentences for various offences. including apostasy.

By breaching Islamic legal norms in this way. Khomeini also reinvigorated the then waning civilisational war between Islam and the West, a war of words and ideas which, from time to time, becomes a "hot war" with Muslims committing acts con-strued as "terrorism" by the West and the West brutally "retaliating" against Muslim countries accused supporting "terrorism," slaughtering innocent civilians. Ten years after the fatwa:

Khomeini's "Revolution" has run

away from the "Imam's Way;" although conservatives still dominate Iran's state structures, they face their most serious liberal challenge ever from President Mohammed Khatami; there has been no rapprochement between Islam and the West because Western liberals cannot understand how Muslims feel about The Satanic Verses: Khomeini is dead and Rushdie, still guarded against assassination by the British police, flourishes. Rushdie was made into a world

figure by the fatwa, a freedom-ofexpression hero, but he remains a hollow man. Born in Bombay two months before Pakistan and India gained their independence from Britain, Rushdie was raised in Karachi where he received an early education at a mission school. He was then sent to Rugby, one of the toughest and most British of the public schools and to Cambridge. During his journey to adulthood he lost his Muslim faith which, he said, left him with a "God shaped hole

Thus. Rushdie, the product of serial geographic dislocation and Western education, became a "brown sahib," a subcontinental "gentleman" belonging to neither his own Eastern culture nor fully accepted into his adopted Western culture. The Indian Subcontinent produced thousands of these "brown sahibs" on whom Britain depended to run the Raj. After independence was granted to India and Pakistan, most flagging fortunes of his "Islamic its course and Iran is moving remained at home, many in senior

'[Rushdie] incorporated into his book all the intentional misconstructions and slanders which have been marshalled against Islam by Christian prelates and scholars over the centuries. He filled his 'God-shaped' emptiness with spite and spewed forth'

civil service positions. They continued their Anglo-Indian lifestyle, rejecting identification with the "natives" and clubbing together for companionship.

But the severely dislocated Rushdie chose to stay on in Britain, raging against British racism to all who would listen and against his subcontinental roots in his prose. While the word was the weapon chosen by this deeply disturbed man, he used the written word to flay the subcontinent which he had rejected rather than his country of adoption.

Although his genre was dreamfantasy, his books were regarded as fictional representations of history by his largely Western readers. "Midnight's Children," which won him the coveted Booker Prize, infuriated Indians; "Shame" insulted Pakistanis. But in "The Saturic Verses," Rushdie described the early years of Islam in a way which gave aid and comfort to the enemies of Islam by reinforcing prejudices and atavis-tic hatreds. Having studied Islam thoroughly at Cambridge, Rushdie knew precisely how to denigrate his former faith.

He incorporated into his book all the intentional misconstructions and slanders which have been marshalled against Islam by Christian prelates and scholars over the centuries. He filled his "God-shaped" emptiness with spite and spewed forth. In so doing he did incalculable damage to Islam and blocked rapproche-ment between Muslims and the West for years to come.

- Vocallah my b The Hathern Subhanalia of protect you

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Letters

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The prophe of Jordan at the thusein "The family" has le four hearts go out to His M. Majests Queen Noor, the Ro lordan Out prayers are with

WITH GREAT sorrow and family extend our deepest s lences to the Royal family Majesty King Hussein. He danding person: a wise less treless champion of peace at the hard been staying in king that time we came to low thenat. itiendly and hospitable peop ein, who devoted his entire country and his people King Hussem will forever t

of digney courage, wisdom with other Russian people, w on the Great King of and an awab og vibustanden

ITAR

PLEASE ALLOW us to extend the entire Royal Hashens people on the demise of His were deeply suddened whee Hussein's passing away. My had the great honour of the al occasions. His Majesty w Serving as a diplomat in A non-way wife-to-be, we got son was born there. How co ing of belonging to the coun who were so good and dear loss has come over us.

Christian

I pray to Allah Subhanahu wataala that He may guide Your Majesty and protect you at all times.

> Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Brunei

IT IS with great regret and sorrow that we have received the message that the beloved King Hussein of Jordan has returned to eternity. The impact of his leadership for the development of Jordan and his endless strife for peace in the Middle East will never be forgotten by the international community.

The stability during King Hussein's long reign has fostered a climate in which the international tourism to Jordan and the whole Middle East has taken positive steps forward and opened up very interesting sites to the individual traveller. Without his efforts to stabilise the situation in the Middle East this progress would not have been possible. The international community of travel agency associations, which UFTAA represents, is mourning a great leader and a human personality of the highest stan-

On behalf of our President Assane Fall and myself I convey the federation's deeply felt sympathy at this tragic moment. King Hussein has returned to Allah.

We take opportunity at the same time to wish all success to King Abdullah in his difficult task to guide your country and people into the Millennium. May Allah be with him.

> Birger Backman Monaco

PLEASE EXTEND my condolences to your Royal Family and the people of your country. I, along with many around the world, mourn the loss of your King Hussein. He served as an inspiration to peoples all over the globe. May the peace he sought so valiantly come to pass.

> Joan Newcomb University of South Florida Tampa

I AM just an average American who would like to extend my condolences to the people of Jordan over the recent death of King Hussein.

I have followed world events and politics for over 30 years and have always felt King Hussein to be a man of peace, honour and integrity.

The entire world along with the people of Jordan will

Denis Pasquale

Amman

ON BEHALF of the organisation, Medecins du Monde, Greece (Doctors of the World), we extend our sincerest condolences to His Majesty King Abdullah, the Royal Hashemite Family and the people of Jordan on the passing of His Majesty King Hussein. May God rest his soul in peace.

> Dr. Ekaterini Manoussaki Ms. Marietta Hadzipetros

I CAME to Jordan for the first time a little over two years ago and fell in love with it. Since that time my family and I have made our home here. The warmth and friendliness of the Jordanian people have made us feel as though we

are part of the family. It is hard to describe the feeling of loss we share with the people of Jordan at the passing of His Majesty King Hussein. "The family" has lost a father, and the world has

lost one of its greatest leaders. Our hearts go out to His Majesty King Abdullah II, Her Majesty Queen Noor, the Royal family, and the people of Jordan. Our prayers are with them.

> F. A. Shepard II and family, formerly of Trinity, Alabama-U.S. Agaba

WITH GREAT sorrow and heartfelt sadness I and my family extend our deepest sympathy and sincere condolences to the Royal family on the passing away of His Majesty King Hussein. He was, in our opinion, an outstanding person: a wise leader, a statesman of vision, a tireless champion of peace and a noble man.

We have been staying in Jordan for 8 months, and during that time we came to love your wonderful country, its friendly and hospitable people, and, of course, King Hussein, who devoted his entire life to the well-being of his country and his people.

King Hussein will forever remain in our hearts as a man of dignity, courage, wisdom and honesty. We, together with other Russian people, will always treasure the memory of The Great King of Jordan, whose name will undoubtedly go down in history.

> Anatoli Metelkine ITAR-TASS reporter in Amman

PLEASE ALLOW us to extend our heartfelt condolences to the entire Royal Hashemite family and the Jordanian people on the demise of His Majesty King Hussein. We were deeply saddened when we heard the news of King Hussein's passing away. My wife, who is Jordanian, and I had the great honour of meeting His Majesty on several occasions. His Majesty was a true statesman, who had

Serving as a diplomat in Amman in the late eighties, I met my wife-to-be, we got married in Amman and our son was born there. How can you not have a strong feeling of belonging to the country and the Jordanian family, who were so good and dear to us. A devastating sense of loss has come over us.

Christina Peridakis-Friis and family

ALL OF us at TCI have been shocked and saddened at the passing away of His Majesty King Hussein.

The whole world admired King Hussein. The whole of the Arabic World admired King Hussein. All of you in Jordan admired King Hussein. He was truly loved by all of mankind.

> Shaun Metcalfe Matt Richards David Swan Denyse Bradford Ian Miller Surrey U.K.

TO DESCRIBE the greatest of kings I offer the words of a

"He was a man, take him for all in all; I shall not look upon his like again."

"... Only I have left to say, More is thy due than more than all can pay."

(quoted from Hamlet & Macbeth)

Mirna Janbek **Amman** I WISH to extend my condolences to the Royal Family on the death of your King.

As a Canadian, I am saddened and upset with the actions of our prime minister. Please do not judge all Canadians by the callous attitude of our prime minister. The world has lost a great man.

> Vern Larsen Cold Lake, Alberta Canada

PLEASE ACCEPT my sincere wishes of support and condolences at the time of your great loss. I pray that Almighty God will grant King Hussein a just reward in Heaven and that the Jordanian people will experience peace, happiness and prosperity, along with all the peoples of the world.

Richard Nelson

I AM writing to express my deepest condolences on the death of His Majesty King Hussein. It is so rare that such a man of character and strength passes through our lives. He was a leader of courage and strength and he touched the hearts and lives of people around the world. My thoughts and prayers are with you all as you cope with your loss, and particularly King Abdullah, as he has the additional burden of dealing with his grief while carrying on the historic traditions of leadership set by his father. May God bless you all.

Lesa Myrick

WE SEND our deepest sympathy for the loss of the great King Hussein. The world lost a great man and we as American citizens but of Arabic heritage feel that the Arabic World was and always will be in need of someone like King Hussein to be it's security and it's guide.

Said and Salwa Marji

THE WAVES were rumbling. The sun was trying to send some of its beauty down to earth, but there was a huge blockage of fog preventing its charm from reaching us to fill our hearts with warmth and happiness. The day is getting gloomier. The Queen inside mourning the loss of her beloved King. We could see her pale face glancing through the window watching the crowd as they got rowdier. Faces with no symmetry, no unity, no order, no nothing that would keep them together, but the grief and the loss of a dear father, friend, and life-long companion.

What would happen, what should happen if the sun came out. Never in a million years will the crowd forget or let go of his memory? Why and for what did their expressions look so inexplicable? It is as if time stood still; no plan for the moment, no thoughts for the future. Nothing seemed to matter or to make sense. I stood there stooping between the congregations, thinking what am I here for? The gate looked too far away for me to reach, but determination and stubbornness got me to stand still. The sky opened up, and I was thrown down, stepped on, felt that my heart left me for good. As I crawled down beneath trying to breathe or to stay alive, all of a sudden a hand just pulled me up and shouted: "Stand in line. What? I didn't comprehend a word, felt like my chin was still smooched and in need of putting back in place. Finally the moment I was waiting for came. All of a sudden the cat ate my tongue. What shall I say to Her Majesty? All that struggle for this moment, and I am now speechless, I did remember saying God be with you but what I really meant is may God be with us all.

> Jane Judeh Amman

I AM an Indian writing from Calcutta. In July last year I travelled from Calcutta to London and I flew Royal Jordanian. I enjoyed my overnight stay

in Amman, and I always respected King Hussein. I would like to take this opportunity to reach as many Jordanians as possible and send them my condolences at this sad time.

> Niladri R. Chatterjee India

I AM eight years old. We love you King Hussein. We will miss you. We will never forget you because we love you. And we will not forget what you did for us. We love you, we love you, we love you. May you rest in peace.

> Yacoub Majdoubek Amman

Yugoslavian delegation

AS THE Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was omitted in the Reuters' list of the countries attending the funeral ceremonies of late King Hussein printed in Jordan Times, we hope that Yugoslavia's attendance could be recognised in today's or the next issue of the Jordan Times in brief notice.

The delegation of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia:

1. His Excellency Mr. Momir Bulatovic, the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

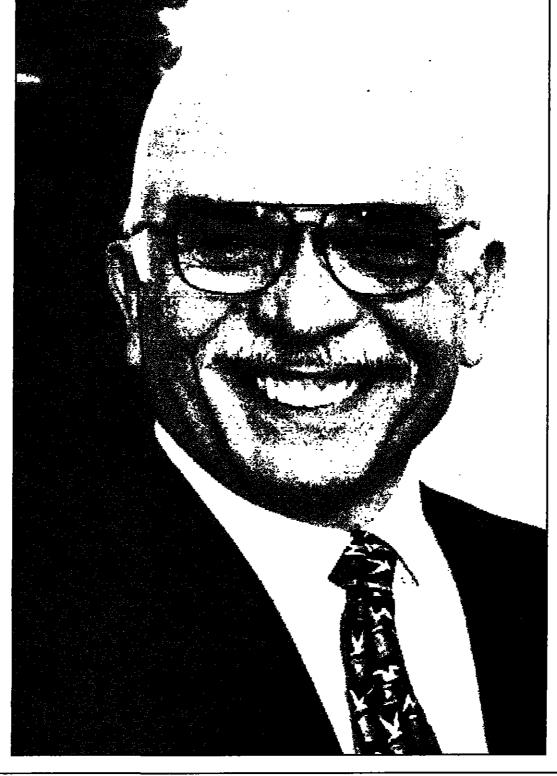
2. HE Mr. Zoran Novakovic, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia;

3. HE Mr. Oliver Potezica, the Charge d'Affairs and Chief of the Mission, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in Amman;

4. HE Mr. Dusan Simeonovic, the Ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of

5. Mr. Ratko Kontic, Special Advisor of the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

> Embassy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Amman



IT IS with great sadness and despair that we the Jordanian students at Purdue University extend our deepest and most sincere condolences for the passing away of His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal, a dear father, a courageous leader

It is a sad day for all of us as we witness the loss of a man that has brought a new meaning to the words courage, bravery and heroism. A man who has been a great idol for all, a father of Jordan and the entire Arab World. King Hussein was a true soldier of peace who brought great visions and achievements to Jordan and the Middle East. He sheltered his nation and his people and brought security, pride and sense of worth to all of us. Through his leadership and charisma, the people of Jordan prospered and flourished in

the eyes of the world. It is indeed a hard time for all of us to be away from our beloved country witnessing our people's devotion in paying their tributes to His Majesty. With all of our hearts, we share the grief of such a terrible loss and join our Jordanian brothers and sisters in mourning and paying tribute to our great leader.

His Majesty's reminiscences and good memories will always remain in our hearts and the hearts of many others who appreciate the achievements and triumphs that he brought to his loyal people, great country and to the Arab region. King Hussein has left us with a legacy and a spark of hope to carry in his footsteps and achieve the triumphs that he has launched and fathered through out his lifetime. May God bless him and bless his family and the Jordan-

ian people. We belong to God, and to God we shall return

Elias Samir Kawar

I JUST wanted to write and say we have been thinking about you and share in your loss this week. The King was an extremely well-respected world leader and well-thought

> Ron Merritt Microwave Radio Communications Duluth, GA 30097

WE WOULD like to express our deep grief and sorrow over the passing of our great father and brother the late King Hussein Ben Talal.

We wish His Majesty King Abdullah continued good health and happiness and to all Jordanians further progress and prosperity under King Abdullah's leadership.

> Ahed Omar Mansour and family Amman

THE HERO of our times

Glorious, majestic and grand humble, enchanting, he is the father of the land We all worship the grounds he walked on and now we pray on the soil he rests under

The gloomy skies shed their tears Flooding the weeping throngs with a deluge of troubled waters and fears

His paean of eloquence and wisdom rest engraved till the end of time

A celestial gift made mundane A "Saint" in a glimmering age of gloom and bane His spirit lives amongst us for eternity

My words are scarce, for poetry is very obscure, personal and erotic I feel handicapped, lamented by his curtains, and

unable to produce a worthy eulogy

His greatness is unfathomable Blurred by his vibrant proficiency as he holds the enigmatic throne

The pulchritude of the rite we all witnessed is a sorrowful memory

One that coalesces pride and inner peace

It was a baneful tribulation One that bridged the world's cultures and foes together in unearthly silence

We are mixed beings, mixed with darkness and light 'Sense and intellect, flesh and spirit

He is lightness, a spirit of his own and an intellectual of all times

Placid, tacitum and still he now lies Benevolent, noble, meritorious, virtuous and kind he will remain

God bless his soul...

Merissa Khurma

McGill U niversity Montreal, Canada

a charisma unlike anyone we have met.

Germany

Developing nations demand reforms in financial world order

(AP) -- Leaders of developing nations Friday urged restricting the ability of currency speculators and multinational corporations to bring havoc upon their economies.

Yearning for a stronger voice on the world stage, the diverse nations of the "Group of 15" agreed that a more humane financial world order was needed to prevent a few players from getting richer at the expense of hundreds of millions of poor.

"We have been reminded of the spread of the consequences of the process of globalisation in a world that has become increasingly heartless. Jamaica's Prime Minister P.J. Patterson said in closing the summit of 17 nations, which represent some 30 per cent of the world's population.

The fallout from Southeast Asia's financial crisis makes it clear that industrialised nations must address the developing world's concerns. the leaders declared at the close of a summit dominated by bitterness over the dark side of globalisation.

The Group of 15 (G-15) leaders emphasised their commitment to free trade. but they said it must be regu-Asia's crisis "did not stem

from resistance of the affected economies to a globalising world ... (but) our failure to manage the integration." said Indonesia's economy minister, Ginandjar Kartasas-

The diversity of interests of the G-15 - which includes Brazil, Mexico, India and Egypt — was reflected in a communique that didn't

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fight increasing poverty and unemployment "as a means match the fiery rhetoric of for ensuring international peace and stability."

— Opposing "disguised Valentine @ Cheers protectionist measures" by industrialised nations and the use of trade sanctions to

> environmental objectives. - Resisting "unilateral measures with extra-territorial effects" — an apparent reference to the U.S. economic embargo against

meeting but did address all

- International rules to

monitor large financial play-

ers, especially hedge funds

and currency speculators

blamed in part for the Asian

crisis. That fell short of Malaysian Prime Minister

Mahathir Mohamad's calls for an international regulat-

development policies and

programmes to meet the

- Speedy implementation

of initiatives by the Group of

8 (G-8) industrialised

nations and the European

Union to forgive the debts of

Urgent programmes to

needs of the poorest.

the poorest countries.

- Social safety nets" in

concerns raised.

It called for:

ing body.

- A comprehensive international convention to com-

more dialogue with the G-8 to change policies at the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, which they said reacted too late and with too little aid to the

The leaders also called for

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O. STEEL	0,950	0.980	+ 3.16%
ARAB ALUMINIUM CHLORINE	1.200	1.920 1.220	+ 3.78% + 1.67%
NESTOCK & POULTRY	0.390	0.410	+ 5.13%
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UNIVERSAL CHEMICAL	0.970	1.020	+ 5.15%
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THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams painter 10 Beliefs 14 Pot starter 15 Worsted cloth 16 Swill 17 Avoid 19 Last breath 20 Get ready 21 Incapacitate 23 Nearest star

24 Lady from Lisbon 26 Consumed 27 Lahr role 32 Part of one's metalware
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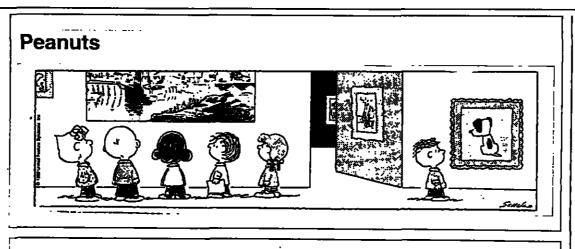
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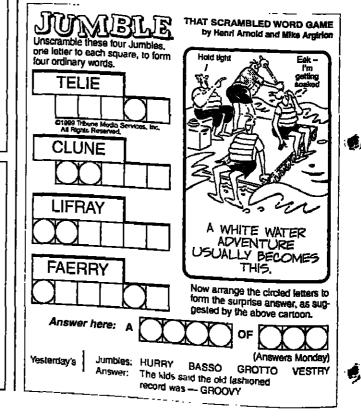




Mutt'n'Jeff



"This morning my boss told me to have a nice day. I assumed that was permission to go home."



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Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Business & Finance

Attracting, consolidating investments seen needing qualified, active personnel

** ACCORDING TO Fawzi Tuaymeh, a member of the Lower House of Parliament, the government measures to activate, encourage and attract investment are still below the ambitions. "The economic measures require a strong, active and qualified state administration that would monitor, evaluate and follow-up these measures." he stressed. Tuaymeh demanded that the concerned parties do the utmost to rehabilitate the administrative cadres of all civil servants in all sectors.

This is a basic and vital matter to consolidate the reality and opportunities of investment to correspond with the ambitions of those who formulate national legislations," the deputy said. "(The rehabilitation) would surpass the bureaucratic measures which often represent the main barrier to lure investment."

Tuaymeh highlighted the Egyptian investment model and saw it as a guide for the officials in the Kingdom from the point of view of administrative and legal mentality and the facilities provided in addition to the infrastructure. The Egyptian model was also seen by the member of Parliament as being outside the mentality of penalising and imposing fines on investors.

The deputy emphasised the importance of foreign investors tearning up with local partners because that would consolidate the trust of the

investors in finding guides who know the ins and outs of many vital and important issues and, as such, can facilitate many procedures and trans-

Wahib Shaer, board chairman of the Jordan Gulf Insurance Company said there must be a vital administration capable of initiating direct contacts with local and foreign capitalists. "Providing them with all the necessary information for their investment operations would create and consolidate the investment climate and opportunities in an encouraging manner," Shaer

The chairman of the insurance company indicated that consolidating investment requires an administrative cadre capable of managing, implementing and explaining various laws in a correct manner. "However," he said, "the international economic crises have proved at this stage that global openness should be gradual so as any mistake or negative effect of the policies or programmes of such an openness will have a limited impact."

Shaer concluded that there is an imbalance in the Kingdom's economic laws and that reflects negatively on the investment performance. He stressed that there should be incentives and commissions to encourage the good investment efforts (Al Arab Al Yawm).

The Polish Ladies Club in Jordan joins the Hashemite family and Jordanian people mourning the demise of His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal who has won love and respect. King Hussein

will remain in our memory as a man of great courage, modesty and remarkable vision who dedicated all his life to this land and its people. May his soul rest in peace and may God give us all the strength to honour his legacy of compassion, love and peace



The Islamic Academy of Sciences Amman - Jordan

The Council, Fellows, Director General and Staff of the Islamic Academy of Sciences in Amman mourn the passing away of HIS MAJESTY KING HUSSEIN I

and extend their sympathy and sincere condolences to

His Majesty King Abdullah II,

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hamzah Ben Al Hussein, His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Ben Talal / Founding Patron of the Islamic Academy of Sciences and members of the Royal Hashemite Family and the government and people of Jordan.

Islamic Academy of Sciences, P.O. Box 830036, Amman-11183



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Deeply regret with sorrow & grief the demise of the beloved King

Father Of The Nation & a Great Leader

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal

and extend their deepest condolences to

His Majesty King Abdullah Ben Al Hussein,

The Royal Hashemite Family and the Jordanian people

South Korean banks register record losses

SEOUL (AFP) — Crisis-bit South Korean banks registered a record net loss of 14.48 trillion won (\$12.32 billion) last year amid mounting provisions for bad debts, financial watchdogs have said

The 1998 data represented a whopping 370 per cent increase from the previous year's loss of 3.88 trillion won, the Financial Commission (FSC) said,

"It was a record net loss," an FSC official said, adding only three of the country's 22 institutions - Hana, KorAm and Shinhan banks — turned in profits last year.

The rise reflected stricter prudential regulations on provisions for bad loans, an increasing number of corporate failures and more reserves for retirement pay.

marked some 64 trillion won for the purchase of bad loans, recapitalisation and deposit insurance. Officials estimate that bad

The government has ear-

loans run up by all domestic institutions exceed 100 trillion Hana was the best performing institution last year with its

billion won from 43.5 billion won a year ago.

Hana boasted that lower provisions for bad loans, wider interest-rate margins and increased commissions boosted income.

KorAm Bank registered a record net profit of 53.4 billion won in 1998, compared with a loss of 37.1 billion won a year

Its low non-performing loan ratio of 2.99 per cent helped underpin earnings, a KorAm spokesman said, adding foreign-currency trading and exchange fees boosted income.

This year, we expect a net profit of 200 billion won on stable interest income, services charges, and bond trading commissions," he added.

Kookmin also made a net profit of 73.4 billion won last year, but its actual balance sheet will be available after it completes the acquisition of a longterm credit bank.

Net losses at five major banks Seoulbank, Cho Hung, Hanvit Korea First and Korea Exchange banks - accounted for 76 per cent of the total.

Commercial Bank, which has agreed to combine with Hanil 1998 net profit jumping to 110.8 Bank, posted a net loss of 1.64

Charles Mackenzie

and Staff of

First National Developer Services

Jordan

Express their sincere condolences

and deepest sympathy to the

Royal Hashemite Family

and to all Jordanians around the

world for the loss of

His Majesty

King Hussein Ben Talal

May his soul rest in peace

trillion won, compared to Hanil's loss of 1.7 trillion won.

The FSC said the integrated net loss of Commercial and Hanil banks would not be available until the institutions complete their merger process, which will require massive but unspecified debt write-offs by the government.

Korea First, which was sold to a U.S.-led consortium in December, suffered a net loss of 2.6 trillion won last year, up from a loss of 1.6 trillion won in

The net loss of Seoulbank, which has yet to find a foreign owner, also jumped to 2.24 trillion won last year from the previous year's 916 billion won. The sale of Korea First and

Seoulbank has been a key condition of a \$57 billion bailout extended by the the International Monetary Fund in late 1997.

The bailout prompted a sweeping reform drive to clean the mess at banks, which have been strangled by high loans-todeposit ratios, low returns on equity and a high proportion of shares in their portfolios.

The FSC last year dissolved five non-viable institutions. including Chungcheong and Kyongki bansk. Hana took over Chungcheong while KorAm

acquired Kyungki Bank. It estimated the combined recurring profit of 22 institutions at 4.8 trillion won last year, up 56.6 per cent year-on-year on increased won interest income. foreign exchange gains, stock gains and lower costs.

Their extraordinary losses, arising from non-performing loans and stock trading losses. rose to 7.5 trillion won from 2.2 trillion won.

The combined interest income fell 8.3 per cent yearon-year to 8.4 trillion due to higher foreign currency borrowing costs and losses from for-

eign currency assets. Total costs were down 17.4 per cent year-on-year to six trillion won, assets up 2,2 per cent to 574.6 trillion won, and deposits up 1.4 per cent to 389

trillion won. Total lending slipped 4.3 per cent to 270 trillion won, but securities holdings were up 2.8 per cent to 191 trillion won.





Join the Hashemite family, Royal Jordanian, the Royal Jordanian Air Force and the Jordanian people in their deep sorrow at the loss of

His Majesty King Hussein Ben Talal,

a great Pilot and Aviator.

May his soul rest in peace.



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THE HOLY LANDS ESTABLISHMENT DALLAS / U.S.A.

AFM keeps upward tempo

By Tareq Ayyoub

AMMAN - Trading at the Amman Financial Market (AFM) rose by three points after it reopened Saturday following five days of official mourning.

Brokers said the brisk trading defied fears among investors that the King's sudden death would reflect negatively on the stock market.

Naim Nageeb, a broker, said that pledges by foreign states, especially Arab Gulf countries and the United States, to extend economic assistance to the Kingdom have "injected confidence" among investors.

"News about foreign assistance have created optimism in the stock market which reflected positively in yesterday's activities," Nageeb told the Jordan Times.

"The smooth succession, proving that institutionalism is deeply rooted in the country, eased the fears of investors," the broker

Amer Muasher, another broker, said trading focused on the "most active shares" bluechips, which are expected to record good profit this year.

The AFM's price index jumped to 181.1 points compared to 178.1 points in the previous week, when most of the shares also recorded increase in their prices.

Out of the 62 firms that changed hands on the floor, shares of 53 companies recorded increase in their prices, two registered decrease while seven firms recorded no change in their prices, the bulletin showed.

Muasher highlighted that the major bluechips, mainly cement, potash, phosphate, pharmaceutical companies and the Electric Power, recorded a limit-up increase in their share prices.

The cement share price rose to JD3.750 up from JD3.680 while the potash share price closed at JD4.040 up from JD3.850.

The Arab Bank, the Kingdom's largest financial institution, rose by 500 fils amid low demand for its shares.

The daily trading amounted to JD2.6 million, the bulk of which was recorded by the industrial sector, mainly pharmaceutical industry.

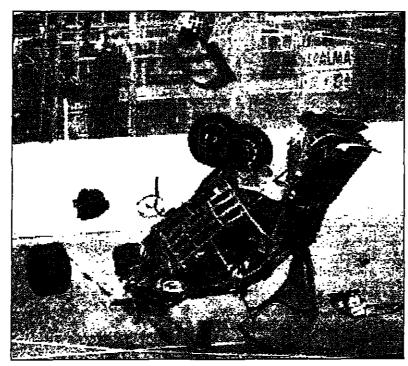
Arab Pharmaceutical Manufacturing recorded JD833,130 during yesterday's activities followed by the Jordan Electric Power which won JD 409,600 while the Housing Bank third ranked with JD301.889, the onepage bulletin showed.

Muasher said brokers and investors expect active trading during the coming days.

Muasher noted that primary results of major firms show good profits in the past year "which will enhance the confidence and trading in the stock market,"

Slew of crashes alters Busch field





Danny Bagwell's race car breaks apart after he crashed heading toward the start-finish line with just four laps left in the Goody's Dash at Daytona International Speedway on Friday. His car barrel-rolled eight times before coming to a stop in the apron, with every piece of sheet metal sheared off the body by the time it stopped. After the car came to rest on the track, Bagwell pulled himself from the car and waited for rescue personnel to reach him (AP photo)

DAYTONA BEACH. Fla. (AP) -Busch Series champion Dale Earnhardt Jr. crashed twice within two hours Friday, and the second one created a four-car wreck that could drastically alter the season-

opening race. Earnhardt was one of six Busch drivers whose cars were damaged enough in practice to force them into backups. Under NASCAR rules, they must drop to the rear of the field at the start of the NAPA Auto Parts 300 on Saturday.

The 24-year-old driver took the blame for the wreck that also involved Ted Musgrave, Dick Trickle and Jeff Burton. He tried to put his car between a slowly mov-Michael Waltrip and Musgrave, who was up to speed.

my nose in there," said Earnhardt. who also wrecked in the IROC race before practice.

"I should have backed off." Musgrave's car was badly damaged, and he was forced to borrow one of Jeff Purvis' backups. Musgrave said more caution is

needed during practice. "You need to slow down and pick your way through rather than trying to barrel through there," he

Two-time Busch champion Randy LaJoie agreed, saying Earnhardt still has much to learn about racing on a fast track such as the 2-mile Daytona International Speedway.

"I probably shouldn't have stuck "They don't pay to win practice. I hope people realise that. We've got a garage full of torn race cars."

LaJoie said Earnhardt hurt his own chance of winning by wrecking his primary car. He doesn't think Earnhardt can be as effective in a backup.

"I'm sure his backup car is going to be good, too," LaJoie said. "But without no practice on the stuff. he's going to have a tough day tomorrow.

Earnhardt also was one of four drivers who crashed out of the season-opening IROC event won by his father. Also taken out in that crash were Burton, Rusty Wallace and Eddie Cheever.

There were no injuries in the "This is practice," LaJoie said. Busch or IROC wrecks, but four

drivers were sent to the hospital with injuries from crashes in the Discount Auto Parts 200, a NASCAR subcompact race earlier in the day.

Two of them were treated and released. Two others underwent surgery for broken legs.
Busch driver Todd Bodine

blamed the track for his crash, that also took out Glenn Allen. "The track's filthy from the Dash race and IROC." Bodine said. "I

ran over something ... hit the wall and then Glenn Allen ran into the side of me." Tim Fedewa, Matt Kenseth, and

Chuck Bown also were involved in accidents. Only Fedewa and Kenseth will start Saturday in their

GS is the basis of ski technique

VAIL. Colorado (AP) Giant Slalom is where it all starts and where it stays. A complex combination of power, technique and grace. it remains the most exciting, and the most fundamental, event in ski racing.

The greatest feeling on skis has to be that of the perfect carve. That is what every racer fights for, all the way down a GS course. When your timing is right, and your turns flow, euphoria. If you apply pressure at the wrong time and your rhythm is slightly off, you will never have a longer minute and a half in your

During summer training camps, much time is devoted to drills and exercises emphasising the fundamentals of a basic GS turn.

The Swiss team even requires their athletes to complete numerous levels of ski instructor certification to reinforce the importance of the basics.

"The GS turn is the centre of skiing." Norwegian men's team coach Max Wahlquist said, "You have to be in balance, you have to use the ski, tip to tail, you have to be in control of the movement." It's certainly easier said than done. But



Marco Buechel of Liechtenstein hits a gate during the first run in the men's giant slalom on Friday during the 1999 World Alpine Ski Championships in Vail, Colorado. Buechel is in first place after the first run with a time of 1:11.31 (AP photo)

the beauty of the GS turn is, once you've got it down, it takes you everywhere you need to go, including the other three disciplines.

Downhill and super-G, although happening at much greater speeds, demand the same basic technique.

"If you don't know how to make a GS turn, you can't ski downhill," Austrian men's coach Wolfgang Frandl said. Wahlquist and Frandl say

that when their racers are having trouble in any other event, they go right back to training GS. "back to the

basics." The fact is, downhill racers only train downhill two or three times a year outside the race season, mostly because it's too hard to find the training space, but also because GS can prepare them just as

It is the basics that make

this event so incredibly difficult to master. Precision is a must, but somewhere in there you have to find room for just the right amount of reckless abandon. ·There is no faking your

way to a successful run of GS; to be fast, it has to be done right. And when it is done right, it is spectacular. The last two days of GS

racing in the World Alpine Ski Championships didn't disappoint. We saw three women on the podium who validated a season of strong results, displaying such mastery of technique that it seemed almost easy.

Then, in one of the most exciting races I have watched in a long time, the men put on a clinic. With so many men able to vie for the podium, they had to find a little extra. I couldn't help but smile in awe as the men risked everything for those medals.

Even though they were skiing a little over the edge. basic technique shone through in every one of those winning runs.

"GS," said fourth-place finisher Paul Accola, "is the base of all skiing. You have only to look at (gold medalist) Lasse Kjus for this."

Sampras' biggest shot is his softest

SAN JOSE, California (AP) - Though he slammed 12 aces and a bunch of unreturnable groundstrokes, the biggest shot of Pete Sampras' quarterfinal win over Bernd Karbacher in the Sybase Open was his soft-

The top-seeded Sampras, who has not faced a break point in the tournament, began with an ace and ended with another as he reached the semifinals with a 7-5, 6-3 win Friday night. Sampras will play his

semifinal tonight against third-seeded Mark third-seeded Philippoussis, a 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (7-0) winner over Justin Gimelstob.

The point that began Sampras' only break of the second set would have made most ballet dancers

Karbacher hit a lob over Sampras' head and far to his

Sampras, backpedalling quickly and barely managing to maintain his balance, reached high above his head and just tapped the ball back for a winner.

That was his first point of the sixth game of the second

He went on to break Karbacher's serve to take a 4-2 lead, then held his own serve twice to finish off the

"It was an unusual point," Sampras said. "I was happy to somehow hit an overhead. My feet kind of got stuck. And I used my little athletic ability to hit that shot. My athletic ability really helped me out there."

Sampras, returning from a 10-week layoff, did not appear to be at all bothered by a blister that has developed on his right hand dur-

ing the tournament.
"I was pleased with the way I played tonight. I'm where I want to be," has gotten better throughout the week."

Philippoussis, who had 11 aces, broke for a 5-3 lead in the third set, but Gimelstob broke right back and forced a tiebreaker. In the tiebreaker, though, Philippoussis turned up the pressure

against a tiring Gimelstob.

If Gimelstob had won. there would have been four Americans in the semifinals — the first time that would have happened in an ATP tour event since 1995.

Cecil Mamiit, two days after being handed a place in his first career quarterfinals when Andre Agassi was defaulted for cursing. played his way into the semifinals on Friday.

Mamiit outlasted Mark Woodforde 7-6 (7-5), 4-6, 6-3 in a match that went 2 hours, 27 minutes to reach a semifinal match against fourth-seeded Chang, one of his role mod-

Mamiit, who began the year ranked 132nd in the world, probably will move up to the Top 100 with his win over Woodforde. It was his first quarterfinal match in an ATP tour event, and he got there because Agassi was defaulted while leading Mamiit by a set.

Mamiit, who lost the first set 6-0 to Agassi, was leading four points to none in the tiebreaker when Agassi had his outburst. The victory left Mamiit with an empty feeling.
"I would have liked to

play that match and get that motivation, knowing I could compete against him," Mamiit said of the secondround match. "I couldn't take anything away from it.

"All I could do was justify the fact I was in the quarterfinals and take advantage of it. This certainly helps. I can't say right now I could

Sampras said. "My tennis have beaten Agassi that day, but I'm happy with my result today.

Chang was a 6-1, 7-5 winner over Christian Rund in Friday's other afternoon quarterfinal.

Mamiit, the 1996 NCAA singles champion from Southern California, has tried to incorporate Chang's running style and mental toughness into his game. He also identifies with Chang because they're of similar height - about 5-foot-8, short by today's tennis standards - and of Asian her-

Chang, of Chinese-American background, has been a hero to many Asian-Americans. Mamiit, a native of Los Angeles whose parents are Filipino, has similar hopes.

"I've always tried to do the same things he has. He's taken the Asian route, becoming a role model for Asian kids," Mamiit said. "I guess I'll be a role model for Asians also."

Chang said he's excited to be facing someone of a similar background.

"I haven't had the opportunity to be able to play that many Asians in my career," he said. "For me growing up, there were very few Asians playing. Now there are quite a few and they're doing well. That's pretty exciting to see."

Mamiit became the first qualifier to reach the semifinals of the Sybase Open since Danie Visser did it in 1988. Visser lost to Chang in the semifinals.

High school coach benches team again

RICHMOND, California (AP) -The Richmond High boy's basketball team has been benched again.

On Thursday, one day before the team's biggest game of the season, coach Kenny Carter canceled practice and shipped his team to mandatory study hall.

Carter made headlines last month when, dismayed by a lack of academic focus, he banned the Oilers from all basketball-related activities, including practices and rallies.

The team missed a non-league game and an alumni game; when they returned to the court after a week, Gov. Gray Davis was in the crowd to show support for the coach's move.

"I think he's a hero," Davis said of Carter. "Obviously, not every kid is going to the NBA. How they do in school will determine how they do in

The Richmond players weren't in

any danger of failing; they all had the 2.0 grade point average the district requires before a student can play. But the team signed contracts with the coach back in September to maintain a 2.3 GPA, and they were falling short.

Carter said he took the latest action because team members were not taking part in daily tutoring sessions that went into effect after the lockout

"For some reason, our young men are starting to slip away." Carter said Thursday in announcing the study hall move. "It's not the overall academics but our study habits and attitudes that concern me. If we can spend the added time studying, our overall grades will have no choice but to go up."

Richmond is 18-4 overall and 5-4 in the Alameda Contra Costa Athletic

Hingis 'stupid' for remarks on sexuality, Mauresmo says

PARIS (AP) - French star Amelie Mauresmo said Saturday that World No. 1 Martina Hingis was "out of line when she made remarks about her homosexuality during the Australian Open.

Speaking publicly for the first time since the tournament — where Mauresmo lost to Hingis in the final -

the 19-year-old vowed to ignore the focus on her sexuality and seek to win a Grand Slam event this year. "Hingis was stupid for

what she said; she was out

of line, But I respect her and I think she respects me," Mauresmo said, speaking to reporters at a central Paris bar. "I don't have a lot to say about it. It is her prob-

Before the final of the showpiece event, the Swiss player — speaking in German at a press confer-ence — was reported to have said "she's here with her girlfriend, she's half a man." when asked about her

Hingis denied making the

remark but her comments were widely televised and sensationalised in some of the Australian press.

Two weeks later, Mauresmo said she is looklater. ing to learn from her experiences in Melbourne.

"There was a lot of pressure from journalists toward the end of the tournament and I am not used to that,"

Mauresmo said, hours after arriving from a vacation in New Caledonia. "It was the first time that I played in a tournament for two weeks and it was tiring, physically and mentally."

Mauresmo, the first top player since Martina Navratilova to talk publicly about being gay, won the French Open and

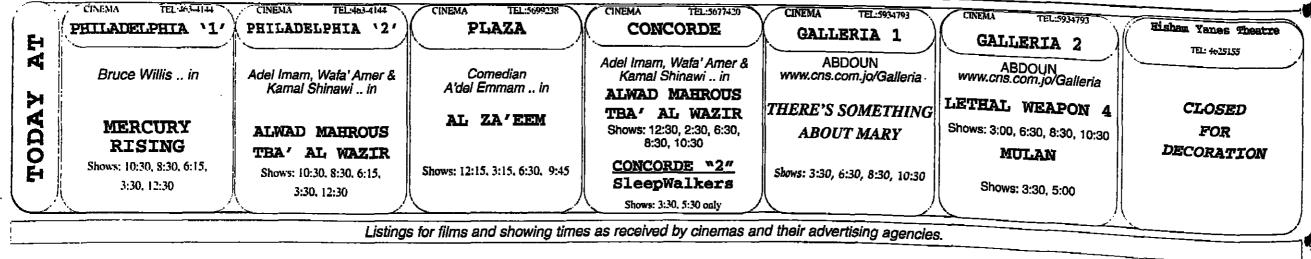
Wimbledon junior titles in 1996, and is shooting up the world rankings, climbing from No. 109 at the start of last year to her current position of No. 18. Now, her aim is to win a

Grand Slam event. "I have a lot of confidence

and feel I can go all the way," she said. "Since I was a girl my dream has been to

win a Grand Slam. All I am missing now is experience." But Mauresmo played down her rapid rise to star-

"This is not going to change my life," she said. "I will continue to do the same things."



pennis F

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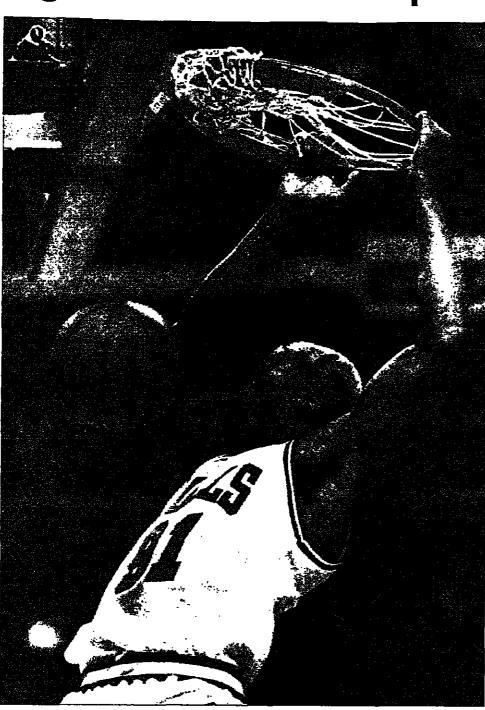
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Dennis Rodman agrees to sign with Lakers — report



Dennis Rodman (File photo)

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Dennis Rodman, the NBA's seven-time rebounding champ and one of the league's most flamboyant players, has decided to play for the Los Angeles Lakers, the Los Angeles Times reported Saturday.

Rodman, known for his dyed hair and cross-dressing as well as his ferocious defense and rebounds, has agreed to play for the veterans' minimum of \$1 million pro-rated to dirs 600,000 for this lockout shortened season, sources told the Times in a story published Saturday.

He will also earn \$3 million from an endorsement contract with Converse, the Times said.

Rodman's agent, Steve Chasman of International Creative Management, has been negotiating with the team for the past two weeks. Talks became sidetracked for a week while they discussed a possible movie deal with Fox, which holds an option to buy into the Lakers as a 10 per cent partner.

Spurs overcome 46 by Iverson to beat 76ers

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Allen sive end and came within four points Iverson scored 46 points for Philadelphia but Malik Rose made up for poor performances by David Robinson and Tim Duncan to lead the San Antonio Spurs to a 98-94 victory over the 76ers on Friday.

Rose, who attended Drexel, minutes away from the First Union Centre, scored a career-high 22 points on 10of-12 shooting and grabbed nine rebounds as the Spurs (3-3) snapped a three-game losing streak.

"My teammates were getting me the ball," said Rose, who bought 64 tick-ets for family and friends. "We played well, we shared the ball and I was the recipient of some good passes and a little luck. Iverson nearly equalled his total dur-

ing the 76ers' 3-0 start. He had been a dismal 15-of-55 (27 per cent) from the field and averaged 16.7 points as Philadelphia got off to a 3-0 start, its best since the 1984-85 campaign.

But it was a different Iverson in this

of a career high, hitting 14-of-26 from the floor and 15-of-17 from the foul

"It would have been better to have a one-point performance and win than having a 40-point game and lose." said Iverson, who added seven rebounds and six assists.

Rose, whose previous career best was 14 points, was the surprising hero as Robinson and Duncan battled foul

Robinson, who picked up his fifth foul early in the third quarter, was 3of-8 from the field and just 9-of-18 from the foul line to finish with 15 points and eight rebounds. Duncan fouled out with 1:59 to play with 15 points and six boards.

"We can't keep putting this kind of pressure on the supporting cast," Robinson said. "We've played some good ball, it's just that we've turned the ball over at times and have not shot as well as we would have liked. It took contest as he dominated on the offen- a total team effort to scrap this one

Avery Johnson scored 15 points and Sean Ellion chipped in 13 for the Spurs, who shot an atrocious 28-of-51 from the foul line. They were outrebounded 46-42 but owned a 52-24 advantage in points in the paint.

In Denver, Nick Van Exel had 26 points and six assists and Chauncey Billups made four free throws in the final 16 seconds to preserve the Nuggets' first victory of the year, a 100-94 triumph over the Dallas Mavericks.

Only five games into the schedule, the Nuggets already are ahead of last season's pace. Denver, which lost its first four games this year by an average of 12 points, started the 1997-98 season with 12 straight losses en route to a franchise-worst 11-71 record, the second-worst mark in NBA history.

The victory was the first for Nuggets coach Mike D'Antoni, who served as the team's director of player personnel during the nightmarish 1997-98 cam-

The Nuggets nearly blew a 16-point fourth-quarter lead but were able to hang on after Dallas rallied within 97-94 with 12 seconds left.

Michael Finley scored 28 points for the Mavericks (1-4).

In Oakland, Karl Malone, who averaged 31 points against the Warriors last season, scored 35 points and grabbed 12 rebounds to lead the unbeaten Utah Jazz to a 97-81 win over winless Golden State.

Utah's 5-0 start is the best in franchise history. The Jazz also posted their ninth straight win over the Warriors and fifth in a row on Golden State's homecourt.

This was Utah's first game against the Warriors since Malone torched them for 56 points, including the game-winning basket in the closing seconds, on April 7.

Terry Cummings and Tony Delk scored 16 points apiece but the Warriors fell to 0-5, four losses short of last year's dismal start.

Sponsors to IOC: Clean up this scandal fast

NEW YORK (AP) — A revolt is taking shape among the Olympics' biggest corpoinvestment is losing value because of the burgeoning bribery scandal.

At a closed-door meeting Thursday International Committee (IOC), the bigmoney sponsors assailed the IOC for its handling of the Salt Lake City scandal and demanded thorough reform, participants said.

"We told them. 'Fix it, fix it fast and don't surprise us." one participant said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The 3 1/2-hour meeting was described as civil but blunt, offering the clearest sign yet the IOC is facing a revolt by the corporations that pay some \$ 50 million each to use the five-ring Olympic logo in

. The meeting involved 10 of the 11 companies in the Olympic Program, the IOC's sponsorship highest-level

group: Sports Illustrated, McDonald's, John Hancock, Samsung, Coca-Cola, IBM, Visa, United Parcel Service. Xerox and Eastman Kodak. Panasonic was not represent-

The worst scandal in the modern Olympics' 105-year history involves allegations Salt Lake City gave IOC members money, gifts, scholarships and other favors to land the 2002 Winter Games. The IOC selects the Olympic host cities.

Sponsor representatives, all speaking on condition of anonymity, said the companies are worried the Olympic rings will lose their "halo effect" and become devalued as advertising tools if the scandal persists. The IOC said it had received

the sponsors' support at Thursday's meeting.
The meeting, with IOC vice

president Dick Pound and marketing director Michael Payne, involved two dozen vice presidents, marketing

chiefs and public relations directors, who said their concerns reflect worries higher

We told them chairmen and bosses were now telling us that they were worried the IOC was not committed to reforms," one participant said. All the representatives interviewed said the sponsors dis-

cussed four things:

— change in IOC management "at the highest level."

— "thorough reform" through the expulsion of any member directly linked to the scandal; so far, nine members have been expelled or resigned.

- permanent changes in voting for Olympic host cities. - more public accountability, including open financial records.

Unless the IOC adopts such reforms at a special assembly March 17-18, "it faces revolt March 19," one representative who attended the meeting said

Payne said he did not see a

significant change in attitude at Thursday's meeting, the second of its kind since mid-January.

"Everyone was very concerned, but they have been concerned. It was not a contentious meeting," he said. "They

asked some questions of us -How serious is the IOC on the reform process?" We told them, 'Very serious." Payne said some of the

sponsors might be feeling pressure as they near the deadline for locking in ad budgets leading to the 2000 Sydney Olympics. For the first time this week,

a major sponsor publicly criticized the IOC. John Hancock insurance broke off negotiations with NBC on dirs 20 million in Olympic ads. The company said the move is designed to pressure the IOC to make significant changes.

David D'Alessandro, John Hancock's president, said he was trying to save the Olympics' good name rather than attempting to force price reductions. In other developments

Friday:

The highest-ranking Olympic official implicated in the bribery case urged the IOC to dismiss the "scandalous allegations" against him and his son.

Kim Un-yong of South Korea said "rumor-mongering" has been a "personal affront" to his "untarnished reputation." In a three-page letter to IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, Kim said he will fight his case vigorously. He has been considered a leading candidate to succeed Samaranch, whose term

expires in $\frac{7}{2001}$. —IOC member Jacques Rogge of Belgium, who heads the oversight panel for the 2000 Olympics, said preparations for those games are being disturbed because the Utah scandal has raised questions about whether Sydney

Jury out on De La Hoya but he gets richer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The jury is still out on whether Oscar De La Hoya is the best welterweight fighter since Sugar Ray Leonard and Thomas Hearns were in their prime.

coach

aga

There's no doubt, however, that he's the richest. De La Hoya will add another \$9 million or so to his already substantial bank account tonight when he steps into the ring to defend his WBC welterweight title against

unbeaten Ike Quartey.

It's billed as the first true test of De La Hoya's career one that has seen the 1992 Olympic gold medalist already earn some \$105 million in the

ring.
It's also the beginning of a dual role for De La Hoya as a partner in the fight promotion _ taking some of the risk out of promoter Bob Arum's pocket with the chance to make a few extra million dollars if the fight sells

"Oscur thinks his fights sell more tickets than they do." Arum said, "I hope my partner's right, but he'll be putting his money up to find out." While De La Hoya has gotten rich in winning four weight division titles in his 29 pro fights, he has also been criticised for carefully picking opponents who were a bit over the hill or were having to move up or down in weight to fight him.

That figures to change with Quartey, who is 34-0-1 and made seven defences of the WBA 147-pound title before it was taken from him for chasing big money fights instead of making a mandatory defense.
"I want a tough fight, a

good competitive fight," De La Hoya said. "I need to fight the tough guys to bring out the best in me." He's found one in Quartey (34-0-1), although the native of Ghana hasn't fought in 16 months and is coming off a draw in which he was knocked down in the 11th round of his last title

fight with Jose Lopez. Quartey has 29 knockouts and is a solid punch-er with both hands, although his straight-ahead style may be made for the boxer in De La Hoya. He weighed 146 1/2 pounds Friday to 147 for the champion.

"I have to figure out what I want to do," De La Hoya said.

"Do I want to impress my fans and the whole boxing world to see who is the last guy standing or do I box him and take him to school? I have to figure that out maybe in the first or second round of the fight." De La Hoya has fought — and beaten — the likes of Julio Cesar Chavez, Pernell Whitaker and Hector "Macho" Camacho, but even he views the 29-year-old Quartey as his first opponent with a legitimate chance of upsetting De La Hoya's carefully laid career plans.

Oddsmakers aren't so certain, making De La Hoya a 3 1/2-1 favourite in the fight, which will be televised by pay-per-view beginning about 11:30 p.m. EST from the Thomas and Mack

Center. "I think this is the first real test in my boxing career," De La Hoya said.

"He is a former world champion. He is unbeaten. I took this fight because I know that style wise Ike Quartey -heavy hitter, dangerous puncher - will bring out the best in me. I'm up for this fight." For Quartey, it's not only the chance to finally earn some big

money - he'll get about

\$3 million — but the

chance to vault his name

into boxing's top tier of fighters. Quartey was supposed to fight Pernell Whitaker last April in a bout that through when Whitaker tested positive

for cocaine. Then promotional problems derailed a possible fight with IBF welterweight champion Felix Trinidad.

"It's the biggest opportunity of my life," Quartey said.

Should De La Hoya win, he won't have to look far for his next opponent. Former threetime champion Frankie Randall and Oba Carr are fighting a 10-round elimination fight on the undercard for the right to challenge De La Hoya on May 22 in Las Vegas.

De La Hoya is rooting for Randall, a 37-year-old former WBA super lightweight champion. Carr is

"Oba Carr wouldn't motivate me as much as Randall would," De La Hoya said. "Frankie is still hungry. He has a name. He'd help me fill up an arena." Spoken just like a promoter.

Pele's son to be tried for murder

SAO PAULO, Brazil (AP) - The son of Brazilian soccer legend Pele is to be tried for murder, his lawyer says. Pele's son, Edilson Cholbi do Nascimento, 27, and Marcilio Jose Marinho de Melo, 24, are accused of killing a motorcyclist by smashing into him when racing their cars. Vicente

Cascione said Friday. Pedro Simoes Neto, a 50year-old retiree, was thrown from his motorcycle and killed in October 1992 in Santos, a port town 48 miles: (77 kilometres) southeast of Sao Paulo, said Cascione.

"I will prove that Pele's son had nothing to do with this car race." Cascione said. "He passed by after the crash had happened and actually stopped his car and tried to help the victim. I think witnesses got the wrong impression." Cascione alleged that Melo had run into the motorcyclist but "was not to blame"

for his death. "It was an accident caused by the imprudence of the motorcyclist," alleged Cascione. "He went over a crossroads without stopping when Melo's car was crossing." Nascimento and Melo will be tried by a jury at a court in Santos probably in May, said Cascione, who will only represent Nascimento.

"Most of the time this kind of accident would be seen as involuntary manslaughter," said Cascione. "But it's a trend in Brazil that death by imprudent driving is considas murder." Nascimento is a reserve team goalie for Santos, the Brazilian first division side

his father used to play for. Pele's given name is Arantes do Edson

Brazilian star is fit and ready for comeback

MILAN, Italy (AP) — Brazilian superstar Ronaldo, long troubled by knee tendenitis, may be back to action next week after French doctors declared him fit to play, Internazionale of Milan officials said

Saurday.

The 22-year-old Brazilian striker would be fielded for a portion of Wednesday's Italian Cup first-leg semifi-

nal against Parma.
Inter's coach Mircea
Lucescu said he hoped to have the star-forward in his best form for the March 3 Champions League quartermatch

Manchester United.
Ronaldo, who has been suffering from inflamed tendons in both knees since the 1998 World Cup in France, has been repeatedly side-lined this season and has played his last Serie A match with Inter on Jan. 17.

However, Italy's largest sports daily Gazzetta dello games, scoring 7 goals Sport reported Saturday that three on penalties.

Ronaldo was cautious about his comeback as he still feels some pain in his left knee.

Ronaldo said in a recent interview that he made a mistake by trying to return to action too soon last year, aggravating his knee prob-

The club said that Ronaldo underwent successful knee examinations by a team of French professors in Paris three days ago.
The Milan club, badly

missing Ronaldo's goals although fielding such stars as Roberto Baggio, Ivan Zamorano and Diego Simeone, is currently fifth in the Serie A standings, eight points behind leader Fiorentina.

Ronaldo was a key to Inter's triumph in the UEFA Cup and to second place in the Italian league last season. This season Ronaldo has played only 8 full matches of Inter's 34 league and Cup



Ronaldo (File photo)

Four-time all-star Price retires after 12-year career

ATLANTA (AP) — Mark Price could have played another Orlando Magic, and the lockout clinched his decision. season, but he was frustrated by the injuries, weary of all the moving around and anxious to get on with the rest of his

So, one of the greatest shooters in NBA history announced his retirement Friday, ending a 12-year career that included four All-Star games, a spot on Dream Team II and some memorable battles with Michael Jordan.

"It is time," Price said during a news conference at Alexander Memorial Coliseum, where he starred for Georgia Tech in the 1980s. "My wife and I are expecting our fourth child in two weeks, there has been a lot of wear and tear and we have made four moves in the last four years." Price, who will turn 35 on Monday, had offers from several teams to return for another season. But he was leaning toward retirement after being waived in June by the championship in 1994.

"You have to know when to say when, and now is the perfect time," Price said. "It makes me feel good to step down when it's my choice and not because nobody wants me." Only 6-foot (1.83 meters) and 180 pounds (81.65 kilos). Price was hardly an imposing presence on the court. But his uncanny shooting touch earned him a spot in the NBA, and he became a star by honing his passing skills.

He has the highest career free-throw percentage in NBA history (.904) and shot better than 40 percent from 3-point range. He finished with career averages of 15.2 points and

6.7 assists per game.

Price spent his first nine seasons with the Cleveland Cavaliers, making the All-Star game in 1989 and 1992-94. He was a member of Dream Team II, which won the world

JORDAN TIMES E-MAIL: jotimes@go.com.jo

Iraq says three killed in U.S. attack

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq said U.S. planes attacked sites in the southern "no fly" zone Saturday, killing at least three civilians and injuring several others.

A government statement quoted a military spokesman as the American plans conducted 34 sorties over the provinces of Basra, Maisan, Dhiqar and Najaf in an operation lasting 1 1/2 hours.

One formation "attacked a civilian installation ... and this aggression caused the martyrdom of three civilians and wounding of a number of oth-

Iraq said the jets attacked a residential area in the southern

city of Al Faw, Basra province, injuring several people including women, and a fishermen's

The report could not be independently verified.

In the United States, the U.S. Central Command in Florida said American planes attacked Iraqi air defence sites near Tallil, about 270 kilometres southeast of Baghdad, and on the Al Faw peninsula.

The U.S. aircraft returned to their bases safely and damage assessment is ongoing, the Central Command statement

"Despite repeated warnings, Iraqi actions and intentions pose serious threats to our

coalition forces and friends in the region. Our actions today are an appropriate response to these threats," the statement

Saturday was the third straight day that Iraq has claimed civilian casualties in the "no-fly" zones, which were set up by the United States, Britain and France after the 1991 Gulf War to prevent the Iraqi air force from attacking rebels in the north and the

Iraq said one civilian was killed on Friday and two were killed on Thursday in northern

The Iraqi statement said that

F-18s. The Central Command confirmed the participation of such aircraft.

The planes came from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the Iraqi statement said.

Iraqi air defences fired at the planes over Dhigar, the statement added.

Iraq does not recognise the "no-fly" zones and has vowed to fire at any plane that violates its air space.

The U.S. Central Command accused Iraq of more than 90 violations of the "no-fly" zones since mid-December. It said U.S. and British forces had retaliated by attacking more

New Iraq disarmament panel completed

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) -The chairman of a key U.N. panel that is to review Iraqi disarmament unveiled Friday a 20member board whose members combine political with technical

expertise. Brazilian Ambassador Celso Amorim, who is to chair three panels which are to review U.N. relations with Iraq in the light of the U.S. and British air strikes in December, unveiled the panels'

composition to reporters Friday. Initial favourable reactions from Security Council members to the disarmament panel indicated that he appeared to have pulled off a tricky balancing act and avoided criticism from both sides in the divided

"This is a balanced panel." Amorim said after submitting the final list to U.N. Security Council President Robert

The team included "people

who can bring to this work ade- UNSCOM chairman and is quate amount of expertise, also an adequate amount of broad view of the problems in differ-

But he acknowledged that he would cooperate with the pan-

Baghdad has vowed that the UNSCOM inspectors, accused of being spies for the United States and Israel, will never return to Iraq, and is demanding the lifting of sanctions which are linked to the elimination of Iraqi weapons of mass destruc-

had no guarantee that Iraq ellists, who include experts of the U.N. Special Commission and its American deputy, Charles Duelfer.

expected, UNSCOM chief Richard Butler will not be a panellist. Amorim confirmed that Butler had told him that "he didn't expect to be in the panel." Russia has cut off official relations with the Australian

demanding his dismissal after his negative report on Iraqi cooperation with the inspectors triggered the U.S. and British air strikes.

The disarmament panel notably includes representatives of the five U.N. Security Council permanent members - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States in a thinly-disguised political role.

UNSCOM is well-represented, with 12 out of the 20 panel members either UNSCOM staff experts (four) or national commissioners (eight) from the UNSCOM advisory board. While there are two

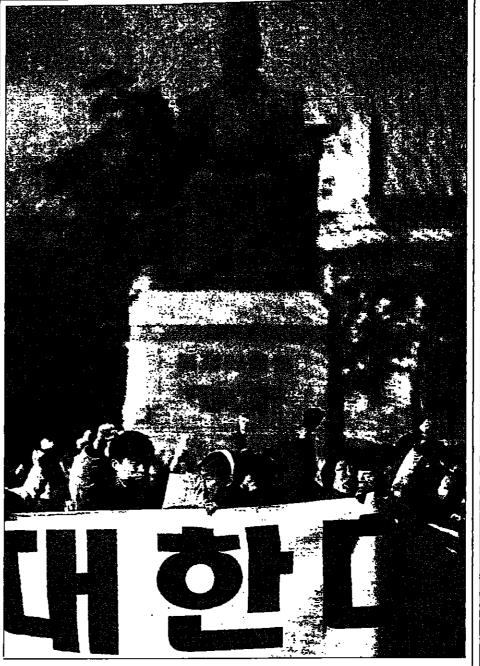
American members, two Britons, two French and two Russians on the panel, Amorim took care to have a geographical balance which in addition to a Chinese expert took in panellists from as far afield as Zambia, Argentina and Japan.

And U.N. chief Kofi Annan will be represented by his undersecretary general for dis-Dhanapala, who is also one of the 22 UNSCOM commission-

ers. Three of the five council permanent members - Britain, Russia and the United States will have their UNSCOM commissioners on the panel. France is not sending its UNSCOM commissioner but a

foreign ministry arms control expert. Daniel Parfait, and China is also sending government expert Liu Jieyi instead of its commissioner. The disarmament panel is the most controversial of the three,

which are also to cover the humanitarian situation and issues relating to the 1990 invasion of Kuwait, because of strong political differences among the five permanent



PROTEST AGAINST LANGUAGE DECISION: Nearly 50 South Korean linguists and activists stage a rally Saturday in front of a statue of King Sejong in Seoul opposing the government's decision to allow Chinese characters on street signs and in government documents. King Sejong of Korea's last Yi dynasty invented the Korean alphabet and promulgated it in 1443. Protesters said the use of Chinese characters will tarnish the Korean language. The banner reads, 'We oppose the use of Chinese characters! (AP photo)

Algerian dies after fight with German right-wingers

COTTBUS (AP) — An Algerian asylum seeker died early Saturday after a fight between a group of rightwing extremists and asylum seekers in a small town in Germany's eastern Brandenburg state, police

Police arrested five youths aged 17 and 18 on suspicion of involvement in the death of the 28-year-old asylum seeker, who was not named. The youths already were known to police for extreme rightist activities and violence, police

The Algerian lived in an asylum seekers home in Semten, near the town of Guben, where he earlier was found seriously wounded in the entrance to a house, dying shortly afterwards in hospital from injuries.

Police said a fight between right-wing extremists and asylum seekers had preceded his death, with one rightwinger suffering stab wounds. His condition wasn't immediately known. Police were investigating.

Separately, Berlin city officials said Saturday police had stopped about 100 extreme rightists from travelling to the Hungarian capital, Budapest, to take part in a march commemorating the Nazi SS.

The rightwingers, some carrying flick knives and neo-Nazi propaganda, gathered Friday evening in Berlin, intending to board two buses to take them to Budapest.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

German bank official murdered in Iran

TEHRAN (AFP) - A German official with the Deutsche Bank in Tehran was shot dead Saturday by a gunman who was later killed by police, the official news agency IRNA reported. Citing an "informed" police source, the agency said the gunman, who was being pursued by police, stopped a car belonging to the German embassy along a motorway south of Tehran. It said he took the German driver hostage and tried to flee. The Heinrich Lembirt Heimes, the Deutsche Bank's Tehran representative. IRNA had reported earlier that a man, "apparently a German national," had been murdered along the Kashan-Qom highway south of Tehran. Police caught up with the gunman and he was killed in a shoot-out along with one policeman, the agency said.

At least 67 dead in Afghan quake

ANDER (AFP) - The death toll from an earthquake which struck eastern Afghanistan two days ago continued to climb Saturday as rescue efforts get underway in isolated districts outside of Kabul. The official Bakhtar news agency said it had confirmed 57 dead and another 10 children froze to death as they were too scared to go back to their homes following the quake. Authorities said 27 children were missing while at least 210 people were injured and the number left homeless exceeded 1,000, according to combined reports. In Ander, near the earthquake's epicentre about 70 kilometres west of Kabul. Wardak provincial governor, Malawy Shamsuddin, told AFP that 300 people from two villages were homeless. "Nine villages were severely affected in the region but we still don't have accurate figures," he said.

Eritrea denies claim of 7,000 casualties

ASMARA (AP) - Eritrea on Saturday denied Ethiopian claims that 7,000 Eritrean soldiers have been killed or wounded in the Horn of Africa war, calling the casualty figures "a pack of lies." The Eritrean News Agency quoted government spokesman Yemane Gebremeskel as saying the figures were greatly inflated and that Ethiopia had not captured key Eritrean military posts as it had asserted. "This is simply a pack of lies," Yemane said. 'This deceptive strategy is very dangerous and very naive. They should not assume their people do not know the truth." The casualty figures announced late Friday by Ethiopia, which also claimed to have destroyed six Eritrean tanks and several ammunition depots, could not be independently confirmed.

Countries to enter NATO next month

BUDAPEST (AFP) - The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland arc o join NATO on March 12, Hungary's MTI news agency quoted the U.S. embassy here as saying on Saturday. The ceremony is to be held at the Harry Truman Library in Independence. Missouri, the report indicated, NATO was founded during Truman's presidency, MTI quoted the U.S. ambassador in Budapest, Peter Tufo, as paying tribute to the Hungarian people who struggled to put their Communist heritage behind them and to play a leading role in central Europe. The report confirmed a statement Thursday by the Polish foreign ministry spokesman that Poland would join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation on March 12,

Revolutionary Guards say fatwa stands

TEHRAN (AFP) — The death sentence issued against British writer Salman Rushdie by the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is irrevocable, Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards force said in a statement Saturday. The statement, carried by the IRNA news agency, said Khomeini's verdict was "based on Islam" and could not be retracted. "The apostate Salman Rushdie will eventually be burnt in the fire of Muslims' wrath," the elite force said. The statement blasted "certain Western countries and false advocates of freedom of thought and human rights" for a two-year "disinformation campaign to make world people and Muslims believe that Iran has backed down from its stances towards the apostate author Salman Rushdie."

Iranian opposition denounces candidate ban for municipal polls

growing row over Iran's reporters. first-ever municipal elections escalated Saturday as Independent and Nationalist opposition leaders condemned the banning of their candidates by hardliners on a selection committee.

"It's a kind of inquisition and we condemn it. [Mohammad] President Khatami should intervene, said Ibrahim Yazdi, head of the banned but tolerated Freedom Movement of Iran (FMI), a leading opposition group. Khatami should "respect

and support a true people's participation in power," he Yazdi denounced the "preselection" of candidates and

his electoral commitments

their "arbitrary elimination for ideological reasons." "The municipal elections are a vitally important test for the nation as well as a

But he added that the

Front (INF), an umbrella includes the FMI, would not call for a boycott of the Feb. 26 polls and urged eligible voters to take part.

"We will participate actively even if they reject our candidates," he told reporters at a press confer-ence ahead of Monday's publication of a final list of approved candidates.

The landmark vote is considered the Islamic regime's first great test in local democracy, but it has provoked tension between conservatives and reformers as both sides seek to consolidate their local power base ahead of next year's parlia-

mentary elections. The disqualification of moderate and left-wing candidates has sparked a war of test of the sincerity of the

words between Khatami supporters and his conservative opponents.

Khatami established an arbitration committee to quell the dispute, but local press reports say the end result has been only that his reformist supporters have been approved as candidates while other opposition candidates have been banned.

Newspapers have said banned candidates must offer a written pledge of allegiance to the constitutional principle that the nation is ultimately guided by its supreme spiritual leader, currently hardliner Ayatollah

Ali Khamenei. Moderate Interior Minister Abdulvahed Musavi-Lari, whose ministry is responsible for running the elections through executive committees around the country, has also attacked the move to bar the candidates as "arbitrary." Vice President Hassan

Habibi said in last Sunday's Tehran Times that "members of illegal organisations and parties cannot run for election." a comment that has not

Iran's late revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, slammed the FMI as too liberal and pro-Western, and Habibi — himself a moderate - said it should be judged on the basis of the ayatollah's remarks.

Moderates are concerned that vetting candidates will dampen public enthusiasm and lead to a low turnout. particularly among the country's 30 million or so youngsters who played a decisive role in bringing Khatami to office in 1997.

About 330,000 candidates, including 5.000 women. have been approved so far to stand in elections for 200.000 council seats.

Vigilantes linked to killers of Iranian dissidents — official

TEHRAN (AP) — Hardline The office of the Oom govervigilantes who assaulted the brother of Iran's supreme leader are linked to the group behind the recent killings of dissidents, a presidential aide said in

remarks published Saturday. About 100 hooligans attacked Hadi Khamenei, younger brother of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and a press adviser President Mohammad Khatami, as he prepared to address a gathering in the holy city of Qorn on Thursday evening.

Khamenei was taken to hospital with "serious injuries," several Tehran newspapers reported Saturday. Earlier reports that he had suffered a fractured skull have not been confirmed.

Newspapers said the attackers also broke the windows of the Mohammadiyeh Mosque and tore down posters of

nor condemned the attack, Khamenei, 51, owns the liberal-leftist newspaper, World of Islam and his political views are moderate, in contrast to those of

his elder brother, who is a leading hardliner in the Iranian hierarchy. Presidential aide Ali-Akbar Mohateshemi said the attack on Hadi Khamenei and the dissident murders were linked.

"Our free-minded people should not sit idle and allow such actions by the intelligence ministry to continue," Mohateshemi told the World of Islam newspaper. "No doubt, those who attacked Hojatoleslam Hadi

Khamenei... were the same group and are linked to them," Mohateshemi said. Vigilantes were trying to replace the climate of "freedom and independence" with vio-

Iraq mourns victims of its worst Gulf War tragedy

cavernous hall of the former bomb shelter, a beam of light steals through a ragged hole in the roof. Some more light is spread by candles burning before rows of framed photographs of children on the The hole was blasted by a U.S.

missile; the pictures are of those killed in the attack on the crowded shelter eight years ago in the worst civilian tragedy of the 1991 Gulf On Saturday, hundreds of people

visited the Al-Amiriya shelter on the anniversary of the attack to pay homage to the 403 people that Iraq says were killed in the missile strike. The victims included 52 children and 261 women.

Unmindful of the crowd around her, a woman in black Islamic garb sobbed loudly as she wiped a picture of her daughter, Shayama Ali Hussein, a teenager with a shock of black hair strewn on her forehead, posing for the camera in her finery.

Reserved in his grief, Shayama's father, Ali Hussein Saleh, wept with no sound, gazing at pictures of his three other children who also were killed in the attack. Also Saturday, the country start-

ed a week of mourning for its dead in the Gulf War. Artillery fired 21gun salutes and senior officials laid wreaths on the Martyrs'

Monument in Baghdad. The government has preserved

BAGHDAD (AP) - In the dark the Al Amiriya bomb shelter as a war memorial to keep alive not only the memory of the victims but also the hatred for the U.S. government. Crayon drawings by children in the shelter showing bombs from U.S. warplanes killing civil-U.S. aircraft had attacked the

shelter in western Baghdad believ-

ing it was a command center.

Reporters who visited the site after

the bombing saw charred bodies of women, children and men being pulled out. The Amiriya bombing resulted in the highest civilian casualty in one attack during the Gulf War, which was triggered by Iraq' invasion of

Kuwait in August 1990. The war ended Feb. 28, 1991. Saleh said he had sent his four children to Amiriya, a short walk

ceiling. Ten minutes later, a second missile went through the hole and exploded inside.

ter but could not go inside. "They brought my son to me. The others I could not even find the remains," he said.

Iraqi officials say temperature

inside rose to thousands of

from his house, for the first time on the night of Feb. 12 at 6 p.m. Just before dawn the next day, he said he was woken up by an explosion. It was the missile that tore a hole as wide as a satellite dish antenna in the one and a half-metre thick

Saleh said he rushed to the shel-

along the edges of the hole like degrees, melting bodies along with petals of a giant flower. Ripped air her 2-year-old daughter, Zara, was

cement and iron. The evidence is conditioning ducts lie on the floor.

Isra Dhiva Fadhel who had also crying without reason. She just regularly in the shelter, didn't go

there on the fateful night because

refused to let me go out." Zara's crying also saved her brother, who was still in Mrs. Fadhel's womb and was born three months later.



An Iraqi woman Saturday mourns the loss of a relative during a ceremony marking the eighth anniver-An Iraqi woman Saturday mootins the ross of a relative during a ceremony marking the eighth anniversary of the bombing of the Amariya shelter in Baghdad. Hundreds of people visited the eighth anniversary respect to the 403 people that Iraq says were killed in the U.S. missile attack during the Gulf War